

OLD  
TIMES.





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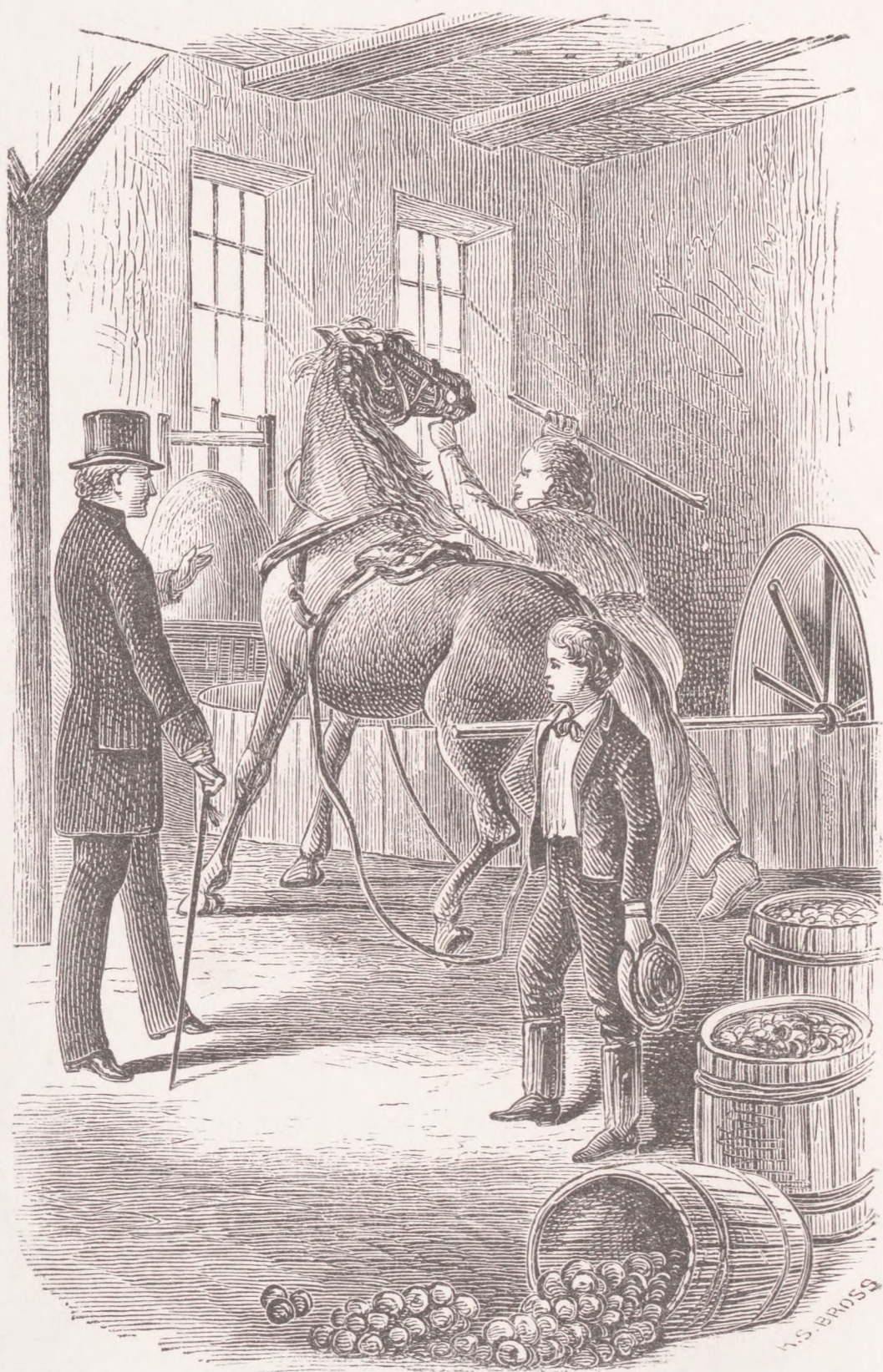












"FATHER, FATHER! THE MINISTER IS HERE."—Page 12.



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# OLD TIMES.

BY

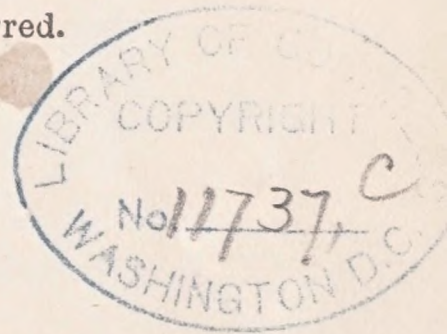
MISS MARY DWINELL CHELLIS,

*Author of "The Temperance Doctor," "Out of the Fire,"  
"Aunt Dinah's Pledge," "At Lion's Mouth," etc.*

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Old times. Old times. The brave, old time  
Of stalwart men, and women strong;  
When God's free gifts of corn and wine  
Were welcomed, both, with shout and song.

Roll back the curtain. Let us see  
If all were true, when all were free;  
If when no warning voice was heard,  
No hearts with grief and anguish stirred.



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NEW YORK:

National Temperance Society and Publication House,  
No. 58 READE STREET.

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1873.



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# OLD TIMES.

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## CHAPTER I.

FIFTY YEARS AGO.

ON'T look for "Hardhack" on any map; for years ago its inhabitants were permitted to designate their town by a more euphonious name, and now it is seldom seen except in old records, embellished with quaint flourishes. Yet a few aged men and women, living more in the past than the present, still talk of Hardhack as it was when they were young; lingering over the name as that of a friend.

Beautiful for situation was it considered at the time of its settlement, and beautiful is it now considered by all who stand upon its



lofty hills, or track its winding streams. Overlooking the surrounding country, the sun's first rays illumine its heights, until they stand in clear, bold outline, waiting for the glory of eventide. So sure as day gives place to night, and the storm-king holds not sway, the gazer shall see, above them it may be, yet so near that they catch the reflected colors—clouds, rainbow tinted, or bronzed with gold of deepest dye. A grandeur and a glory too there is, when all the glow of color disappearing, heavy masses of vapor are swept by the eddying wind; now concealing and now revealing bare peak and wooded hill.

More than a century has elapsed since the first log house was built in this old town and the first farm located. Two brothers, George and William Ransom, claimed the honor of leading the new settlement; although one of their neighbors, two miles distant, insisted that he had felled a large tree before they had made a chip. However this may be, it is true that they with their



descendants were always first in every good word and work.

They, with their wives and a few other God-fearing men and women, formed the members of a church which has since numbered among its members many who consecrated noble talents to the service of religion. Officiating as deacons, until their hands, palsied with age, could no longer bear the sacred emblems which commemorate our Saviour's death, these brothers were still wise in counsel, when others had assumed the active duties of their office. Good, true men they were, according to the light given them; going home to their reward, after lives of more than fourscore years.

Nearly threescore of these years they had spent in Hardhack, and during that time marvellous changes had taken place. The one small house which afforded ample accommodations for four, became too strait, as girls and boys clustered around their parents; and in process of time two large frame houses were



built. Boys grew to be strong, stalwart men, and girls stepped within the pale of womanhood. Forests had disappeared, giving place on the uplands to extensive orchards, and in the valleys, to broad fields of waving grain.

The little band of Christians which covenanted together in the early days had received numerous accessions, until it was the strongest church in that part of the State. Its pastors had been faithful preachers of the Word which is profitable for reproof and instruction. They visited the families of their parish, prayed with all, and drank to their good health.

The choicest liquor the house afforded, and no house but afforded some, was brought forward for the minister, who was nothing loth to test its qualities. Many a sharp discussion was held, and many a knotty point in theology settled over a glass of old wine or cherry-bounce. Pastor and people, men and women, all considered alcoholic drinks among the necessaries of life; and the health,



sobriety, and good order of communities, under the old regime, are often quoted to prove that moderation is the true policy. "Drunkenness was then rarely known," say those who delight in referring to the past as a golden age. "Our grandfathers and grandmothers were good enough, and they drank as they pleased. Show us men and women who can accomplish what they did, when twenty barrels of cider were arranged against the cellar walls, with smaller casks of liquors to fill up the chinks. Prohibition was not dreamed of. Each man attended to his own business, and no one thought to question another's right to eat and drink such things as seemed to him good."

Heard for the first time, these assertions and demands sound somewhat like arguments. But it would be well to consider whether the premises are actually true, before accepting the conclusions, which those who advance them claim as logical. If our ancestors performed more of good, honest labor, both



mental and physical, than an equal number of the present generation, in similar walks of life, and this superior energy is due to the moderate use of stimulants, there is some pertinence to the remarks I have quoted.

It cannot be that in the agitation of the great question of temperance, upon which, next to religion, depends the future of our country, any thing so strongly bearing upon it should have been overlooked. The past has been fairly judged, in the light of knowledge, to which each day's experience adds. The profoundest thinkers and wisest philosophers assert that the old days were not better than are the new.

But to return to my story, which, as a record of facts, has a claim to consideration. In Hardhack, fifty years ago, people could sit in the square pews of the meeting-house on the hill, every Sabbath from January to December, with no fear of hearing a temperance sermon. Preachers were mighty in the doctrines; quick to perceive any laxness on the



part of those whose spiritual teachers they were, and prompt to meet the exigency.

Perhaps doctrine was most needed ; but it is a well attested fact, that the Rev. Thomas Gibson found it necessary to visit one of his deacons, and remonstrate with him in regard to certain practices which were bringing reproach upon the church.

Deacon Cragin was a passionate man ; quick tempered his neighbors called him ; and woe be to the child or animal which crossed his path when his temper was aroused. He was noted for abusing his cattle, beating his horses, and dealing heavy blows in his family.

Mr. Gibson had not long been his pastor when this state of things became apparent to the new minister, and after a meeting for prayer, in which the Deacon bewailed the low state of religion in their midst, the time seemed propitious for speaking with frankness.

Abundant crops had been harvested. Barns



and granaries were full. Apples filled their usual receptacles to overflowing, while with many a creak and groan the heavy beam swung round in the cider-mill owned by Deacon Cragin. Other mills in town were closed, but here work remained to be done, and Mr. Gibson paused by the open door. An accident had just occurred, and the Deacon was enraged. His boys made haste to get beyond his reach, but his horse, poor creature, could not escape.

"Father! father! the minister is here," called his eldest son. But the words were not heard, and a firm hand grasped the arm of the angry man before the visitor was observed.

"A merciful man is merciful to his beast."

The whip was allowed to fall, and, with well-feigned cordiality, an invitation was given to "go over to the house."

"That is what I intended to do," replied Mr. Gibson, gravely. "I came to talk over the interests of the church with you, and



hoped to find you at leisure. I see that you are busy."

"Not so busy but what I can stop," said the Deacon. "I've had bad luck, just as I got most through grinding; and I'll leave the boys to mend up, if they can."

Some directions were given, and then minister and Deacon started for the farm-house at the foot of the hill. Mrs. Cragin, seeing them coming, hastened to light a fire in the "square room," draw two chairs directly in front of the blazing pile, and brush a stray line of dust from the hearth. All this she did with some trepidation, not quite sure that it would meet the wishes of her husband.

According to general custom, the guest was first ushered into the kitchen; but he was allowed to stop here only long enough to exchange greetings with its occupants. Deacon Cragin, in no mood for spiritual conversation, was in haste to be through with this interview.

"Sit down, Mr. Gibson," he said, after clos-



ing the door behind them. "I hope nothing wrong has happened in church matters."

"Nothing new has happened," was the reply. "But I am very anxious, and came here for comfort."

The Deacon rubbed his hands. He enjoyed giving advice; and with him, *advice* and *comfort* were synonymous terms.

His pastor continued: "At our prayer-meeting last Tuesday, you said you feared there was something in the way of our having a revival of religion."

"Yes, sir, I've thought a good deal about it lately. I've been afraid some of our church members were letting go the faith of our fathers. I had a talk with Mr. Sprague the other day, and he don't see his way clear on foreordination. Then there's Tripheny Whitney, she counts too much on God's mercy, and don't think enough of the terrors of the law. I don't want to find no fault with you, Mr. Gibson, but Parson Grimes used to preach rather different from what you do.



There isn't a verse in scriptur but what he understood and could explain, and I used to tell my folks the tougher it was the better he liked it. If you'd just give us some sermons on doctrinal pints, don't you think they might do good?"

"They might; doctrine is profitable; and I had not suspected myself of failing to preach a just proportion of it."

"No, no, you haint failed in any thing, We're suited with our minister. There don't nobody say a word against you. Deacon George Ransom said, just before he died, that the Lord had heard his prayer, and sent us the right man."

"Thank you;" and having said this, Mr. Gibson considered how he should make known the object of his visit. He referred again to the prayer-meeting. "You said, last Tuesday, that if any thing in your life was the means of injuring the cause of religion, you wished to know what it was."

"Yes, sir; I have some recollection of



saying something like that," was the hesitating response. "I don't want to be a stumbling-block in the way of sinners."

"Every Christian has that feeling; but we are often so blinded that we fail to see where others stumble."

"Yes, that's what I told brother Sprague when we were talking about the decrees."

As the Deacon said this, he opened a cupboard by the chimney, and taking out decanter and glasses, placed them upon the table.

Mr. Gibson, aware that his host was already under the influence of some kind of stimulant, decided to run the risk of giving offence, rather than encourage further indulgence. "You must excuse me, deacon," he replied when a well filled glass was offered, "my head is none too clear, now; and I have part of a sermon to write before I sleep."

"Then this is just what you need. It will sort of lift you up, and take away all your trouble, if you have any. Take a glass before we go any further in our talk."



"No, I thank you. I should feel the worse for it, and I have not long to stop. You speak of doctrines, and they are good; but don't you think that our example, the spirit we manifest in our every-day lives, and the words which fall from our lips, in unguarded moments, have a greater influence upon those around us than all our talk about doctrines?"

If the face of the man addressed could have flushed with a deeper color, it certainly would have done so as this question was asked. This being impossible, a nervous twitching of the mouth, and an angry flash of the eyes were the only manifestations of embarrassment.

"Perhaps they do," he answered.

"No doubt of it, Deacon; and those of us who have easily besetting sins can hardly estimate the injury we do in yielding to them." So far, the pastor had received no encouragement to believe that his admonitions would be kindly received, yet having formed



a purpose, he was not to be turned aside from it. "You were very angry when I rode up to your cider-mill, and you were beating your horse unmercifully. You have the reputation of being a hard man in all the relations of life; and I have thought, if you realized this, you would do differently. It can't be that a Christian would *willingly* lay himself open to such a charge. I knew, before coming here, that the chances were you would be offended with me for saying this, but I considered it my duty."

The deacon's face was livid now, as he asked: "Who has slandered me in this way?"

"I don't think any one has slandered you," answered Mr. Gibson. "I speak what I know, except as regards your family; and I judge, from appearances, that you govern your children more by fear than love. If we are to have a revival of religion, it must begin in the church, and each member must see to it that one heart is right in the sight of God.



If I am in any way hindering the good work, I hope it will be revealed to me. You think I should preach the doctrines more strongly, and I shall not forget what you have said. I believe you wish to do your duty, Deacon Cragin, and if your hasty words and blows dishonor the profession you have made, you ought, as a Christian, to abjure them forever. Let us pray that God will give us light, and help us so to live that his cause may be glorified."

Saying this, the clergyman knelt and poured out his soul in prayer, all unconscious that his companion remained sitting.

Never before had Timothy Cragin listened to so much plain, honest speaking, addressed to himself, and it required an effort on his part to comprehend its full meaning. Anger at first threatened to prevent all good results; but something in the manner of his pastor banished this. That very morning—he remembered it now, although at the time it had seemed of no consequence—he struck



his youngest boy, because the axe was mislaid. There was no reason why he had done this, only to vent his impatience. The child knew nothing of the axe, but being near his father, received a blow.

The father was making a mental confession of this, when he was roused by the remark: "I should be glad to join with you now, deacon."

"I can't pray," he said. "I must think awhile. I'm afraid you've told me the truth. I'm quick-tempered, and easily provoked. Then, I don't always feel well. I get up in the morning with a headache, and a noise with the children makes me cross. Another thing, I want my cattle and horses to mind, the minute I speak, and if they don't—I see how 'tis, Mr. Gibson, and I don't bear you no ill will for what you've said, though it's pretty hard. You'll drink with me now, for friendship's sake?"

"No, Deacon; and if you will allow me to add to the advice I have already given,



I should say, be careful that you don't overstep the bounds of moderation in the use of liquor. The less I drink the better I feel. I am sure to have a headache after making parish calls, and I attribute it to drinking at every house. People in other parts of our country are beginning to talk of giving up the use of liquor as a beverage, and I have received several letters upon the subject from eminent clergymen in other States."

"I've heard something about it," said Deacon Cragin. "There's been a man visiting at Mr. Whitney's, from York State, and he says we're behind the times here. He would not taste a drop of any kind of liquor."

"I am inclined to think he was wise in that. I have had serious thoughts, myself, of joining the advance movement, and giving up the use of all alcoholic drinks."

"You have!" was the reply. "I do hope you won't, Mr. Gibson. Our people ain't used to new things, and there'll be sure to



be trouble if you say anything about it. I need something to brace me up; and I never could get through a year's work on my farm if I didn't take a little spirit occasionally."

"I know that's the way most of our farmers would talk; but I am not a farmer. I don't need any spirit of alcohol to help me write sermons."

The Deacon shook his head gravely, and responded: "My father always used liquor, and he was a good man. I'm willing to follow his example. Then we've Scripture for using wine, and Parson Grimes said that included all kinds of liquor. I hope you won't say anything against it."

"I shall not, unless I feel it be to be my duty," replied Mr. Gibson. "I have no desire to condemn the habits of our fathers, although I am beginning to think that *my* father is wrong in this matter. Yet he has been very temperate in the use of liquor, and took good care that his boys should understand the necessity of this."



"I mean to be temperate," said deacon Cragin. "I only take what spirit I need, except as I drink with company; and now it don't seem quite friendly for you not to try this brandy. Old Mr. Nichols was in here yesterday, and he said 'twas the best he ever tasted. He's a good judge, too."

"I presume he is;" and the clergyman thought of how this old man had looked the last time they met. His eyes were red and watery; his lips were parted, revealing a discolored mouth; and his whole appearance was disagreeable in the extreme.

"He is so old," said a good woman, apologizing for his looks; and yet Mr. Nichols had lived but little past the allotted age of man. A professing Christian, constant in his attendance upon the ordinances of religion, he was ever ready to defend the doctrines of his faith; while at home he was fretful, fault-finding and peevish to the last degree. Ever complaining of some ache or pain, several doses of bitters were required each day to



keep up his strength. Mr. Gibson knew all this, and was quite willing to trust the old man's judgment in regard to the brandy. So he persisted in its refusal, much to the chagrin of his host. "If I enlist in the temperance cause, I shall hope for the support of my deacons," he said, as he rose to go.

"I'm afraid you wont have it," was the reply. "I don't see my way clear to give up the old habit. It seems as though folks had a right to eat and drink what they're a mind to. I told that man from York state I wouldn't sign no paper making promises. I don't believe in signing away my liberty. When a man's twenty-one, he ought to know enough to take care of himself."

"People ought to know more than they do. But you must acknowledge, deacon, that there are some in town who would be better off if they were obliged to do without liquor."

"Well, yes, I suppose there is. There's Nate Barnes, Sam Buffy, and Sukey Towne, they drink more than does them any good."



“You have named three, deacon. I could name ten times that number, and some of them members of our own church. I am sorry to say it, but it is the truth,” added Mr. Gibson.

Fairly committed now was the young clergyman, although he had not intended it when he left home. Deacon Cragin would be likely to repeat what he had said; and before another Sabbath it might be known throughout the town.





## CHAPTER II.

## LITTLE LEAVEN.



ARDHACK was no worse than other places, but the inhabitants were quite sure that their manner of living was right, and it would require a mighty influence to work any positive change in their habits. A hardy, independent people, living much out of doors, and exhausting their strength in physical labor, they had neither time nor inclination for much intellectual research. They studied the Bible, and intended to follow its teachings; but then, as now, each read for himself, and as the deacon said, "perverted scriptur was hard to argue away."

He did not thank his pastor for telling him his faults, yet he so far denied himself as to return the brandy to the cupboard untasted.



Mrs. Cragin had expected that the household would be called together as usual, and wondered much when she saw Mr. Gibson half way up the hill. Afraid that something was wrong, and yet not presuming to ask in regard to it, she could only wait the development of time.

The boys, who were still at work in the cider-mill trying to repair the accident which had been caused by their father's impatience, hoped that the minister would stay to supper.

"I'm sick of being scolded at from morning till night," said Jerry, the eldest. "Father never is satisfied with any thing, and it's no use trying to please him. I aint going to try much more."

"What are you going to do?"

"Run away," was the reply.

"Where'll you go to?" asked James, the youngest boy present.

"Any where, out of father's way. He got mad, and struck the horse for nothing, else



we shouldn't had this fuss. There's always something of the kind happening. I shall be glad when I'm twenty one."

"So shall I. So shall I," echoed two voices.

"Jerry, don't you remember what that man said that was visiting down to Mr. Whitney's last summer?" asked Ira.

"I remember a good many things he said."

"Well, I mean what he said about drinking liquor."

"Yes, I do remember what he said about it," answered Jerry. "He said it made people cross and ugly, and I believe it. I'm glad I heard him talk."

"So am I, and I shan't forget it in a hurry," responded Ira. "Father says liquor aint good for boys and women folks. Mr. Haskell said it aint good for anybody."

"But the minister drinks," suggested James, or, as he was universally called, Jim Cragin, a boy twelve years of age, who could look his father full in the face, and tell the truth at all



hazards. "I mean to ask him about it some time, and see what he says."

"Wont you be afraid?" asked one of the brothers.

"No, indeed," was the reply. "I heard him say he liked to have children ask him questions. Pheny Whitney said she was going to talk to him about it."

"But she's a woman."

"I know it; and I'm a boy, that wants to know things as much as she does."

Deacon Cragin did not stop to find fault as he passed through the kitchen; neither did he scold when he reached the cider-mill, although his boys expected a scolding extraordinary.

"We can't get through to-morrow," he said, at length. "I'm sorry for that. It's getting late in the season, and there's a good deal to be done before school begins. They say we're going to have a good school, and I want you all to go every day. The master aint going to board round this winter."



"Aint! Why not, father!"

"Because he wants to study. Mr. Whitney said they'd concluded to board him cheap, for the sake of his company, and the district are going to pay in grain. He's some relation to them, and they wanted him to come and make a visit, any way."

Ordinarily, the boys would have learned this away from home, as their father seldom talked with them, except to give orders, or find fault. Now he was thinking, and felt the truth of what had been said to him. For some reason, work went easier, and the accident was repaired with very little trouble.

"We can finish up to-morrow by grinding a while to-night," said Jerry, a little before dark.

"Yes, I suppose we could; but you boys must be tired enough to stop."

"No matter about that. We want to get through."

The evening proved a good time for work. Every thing moved smoothly, and there was



no scolding. The next morning, however, the deacon had a severe headache, the younger children were fretful, and poor Mrs. Cragin found it difficult to meet the many demands made upon her. Her husband was always impatient for his breakfast, and the consciousness of this only increased her trouble.

"A hard man," his children did not climb upon his knees, but kept at the opposite side of the room from him. Twice he went to the cupboard and took down a bottle, and twice replaced it without drinking. Yet he felt badly. His stomach needed something bracing, and—yes, it was true—although he was the deacon of a Christian church, his appetite craved indulgence.

It was a sin and a shame for such men as Sam Buffy to love the taste of liquor; but respectable men who could govern their appetite, how was it with them? Ah, human nature was then much the same that it is now, and the actors in any given drama seemed to make a wonderful difference in the drama itself.



Breakfast ready, there was no more time for moralizing. This meal dispatched, the Bible was read, and a prayer offered, as usual.

"Shall we go up to the mill!" asked Jerry.

"Yes," answered his father. "I've got to look after some things at the barn, and then I'll come up. I hope we shall get through grinding to-day."

"We shall get through in good season," was the reply. "I should like to go down to Mr. Whitney's after supper, can you spare me?"

"Home is the best place for boys," Deacon Cragin began to say; and then changing his mind, gave the desired permission, adding, "Ira and Jim can go along with you, if they want to."

Work was through at the mill soon after dinner, there having been no occasion for scolding or blows. The deacon's headache had vanished, and he was in remarkable good humor, when old Mr. Nichols came in, bewailing his infirmities.

"There didn't nothing seem to do him any



good. That brandy he drank the other day went to the right spot, and helped him wonderful; but since then he'd tried most every thing."

Of course he wanted some more of that brandy, and of course he received it. Observing that his host did not drink with him, he asked the reason.

"O, I thought I wouldn't drink any spirits to-day;" was the reply. "I'm trying an experiment."

"You! Deacon. I didn't think that of you. I don't believe in trying new things." And the speaker drained the glass which he held in his palsied hands. "Much obliged to you. That'll do me a sight of good."

"There, I knew what he came after all the time," said the irrepressible Jim, so soon as the visitor was gone. "He's always guzzling down something, and is just as cross as a bear. I'm glad he aint my grandfather; and I hope I shan't live to be old, if I've got to look as bad as he does."



"Hush! don't talk so," said Mrs. Cragin, looking from Jim to his father, who made no comments. "Mr. Nichols is a good man."

"Well, I never want to look like him, if he is, and I know what makes him look so too."

"What is it?" asked the deacon.

"It's because he's dranked so much cider and liquor all his life," answered Jim, nothing daunted.

"Why, my son, don't talk so!"

"It's the truth, mother. I heard that man down to Mr. Whitney's talk about it."

"Did he talk about Mr. Nichols?"

"No, ma'm; but he told how all old men look that drink rum, and it's just like Mr. Nichols. Sam Buffy looks so too, and lots of other folks that go to meeting. You see, I'm on the watch now."

"That boy remembers every thing he sees and hears," remarked the father not long after. Mr. Gibson says he'll be a smart man, but I'm afraid sometimes he'll be a bad one."



"I hope not," replied the mother, with a low sigh. "Jim is always a good boy to me."

Going to Mr. Whitney's was a great treat to the Cragin boys, and at this particular time it promised to be a greater treat than usual. They were anxious to hear about the schoolmaster, and look at some new books, which the owners were unwilling to have carried from the house. Jim, especially, was interested in these books, he having caught a glimpse of them while delivering a message from his father.

"Come home early. Remember it's Saturday night," was the injunction, to which a hearty, "Yes, sir," was responded.

"I can't think what's got into father," said Jim. "He never was so good-natured before. I wonder if the minister talked to him."

"I don't care whether he did or not," answered Jerry, whose head was at that time full of plans for leaving home.

Mr. Haskell, who visited at Mr. Whitney's



the previous summer, had talked so much of the West, with its fertile lands and abundant crops, that the young man thought all things would be possible to him, could he reach the favored country. Jerry Cragin was willing to work, and did work; "not a lazy bone in him," as those said, who knew him best, but he was high-spirited, and impatient of arbitrary restraint.

"You don't feel very good natured, yourself, I guess," said Jim, in reply to his brother's remark.

"I guess I don't, but I'll try and get over my cross fit before we get to Mr. Whitney's," was the answer; and presently he laughed at some joke perpetrated by Ira.

If the kitchen over which Triphena Whitney presided was not, in reality, the most pleasant in town, it certainly seemed so to those who entered it that evening. There was a fire in the ample fire-place; not smouldering and smoking with faint, spasmodic efforts to shed some ray of light, but blazing



cheerfully, while long tongues of flame darted up the wide-mouthed chimney.

"Good evening," said Triphena, rising from the low rocker, of home manufacture, in which she had been sitting. "I'm glad you came down; John and Frank have been talking about you since supper. They've just gone out a little while with father, but they'll be back soon. We'll have some candles, so we can see each other."

"It seems light here now," remarked Jerry, with an effort to overcome his embarrassment.

"Plenty of fire-light; father and the boys are careful to keep plenty of dry wood."

At this Jim gave a little nod, as much as to say, "I'll remember that."

Two candles were lighted and placed upon a small round table, on which lay the new books, and the room was even more pleasant than before.

"Now you can read, if you choose," said Triphena. "We think we can't let our books be carried out of the house; but we shall be



glad to have you come here to read them any time. I hope you'll like to come, after school begins. John and Frank are expecting to learn a great deal this winter."

"Is the master going to board here all the time?" asked Jerry.

"Yes, that's the plan. He wants to study, and thought he couldn't board round, and do that very well; so the district concluded to pay what father asked for his board."

"He's from college, aint he?"

"Yes, and he's my cousin, though I've never seen him. His mother and my mother were sisters."

"Then he's some relation to Mr. Haskell?"

"Yes, and I guess he's some like him. Any way, I hope he is; and so does father. Our school needs a good teacher."

"What's the master's name?" asked Ira, whose attention was divided between a book and the conversation.

"George Hudson," was the reply.

"Do you know how he looks?"



"I know he is tall, and has brown hair and blue eyes. Mr. Haskell said he was called handsome."

"Then I guess he looks some like you," remarked Jerry, without a thought of complimenting his hostess.

"Perhaps so," she answered, with an amused smile; and just then her father and brothers came in.

There were hearty, even boisterous greetings; Mr. Whitney's presence being no restraint upon his sons.

"Finished cider making for this year?" he asked.

"Yes, sir," was the reply.

"How many barrels have you made?"

"Twenty-five."

"That's a large supply for one family. I haven't made but about half as much as I have before; and I expect Pheny will use half of that, cooking. The boys and I have about concluded not to drink a great deal."

"We're getting pretty temperate," remarked



the daughter, smiling. "There hasn't been any liquor dranked in the house for more than a month, except when we had company."

"Pheny don't allow it," added her brother Frank.

"No, I don't," she answered. "If father would give his consent, we wouldn't have it for company."

"We'll see about that," said the father. "But perhaps you'll allow us some nuts and apples, with cider enough to wash them down."

"Yes, I will, and Frank may go after them."

Frank, who had been exerting himself to draw Jim Cragin's attention from a book, sprang up willingly, sure that the apples and nuts would rouse his playmate.

In this, however, he was mistaken; and at length his father said, "Let Jim read, if he wants to. You'll have time enough to talk with him this winter. Every one must go to school; and I expect the large boys will help the master. George Hudson wont want to



spend his time thrashing unruly scholars; though from what I've heard, I judge he's able to do it."

"I guess he won't need to do much thrashing," replied Jerry. "The master we had last winter didn't know so much as some of the scholars, and we found it out."

"Well, we can try, George, and I hope you'll like him. He's had to make his own way in the world, and knows what hard work is. His father is a poor man, but George thought he must go to college."

"What do you think about having a temperance society here in town?" asked Triphena Whitney, just before the boys started for home.

"I wish you would have one," exclaimed Jim; "I'd belong to it the first thing, and I guess all our folks would, except father. He wants some bitters two or three times a day."

"Jim!" said his brother, in a tone of reproof.

"Well, what's the matter? I haven't told



any thing but the truth, and mother says the truth's always right. O, dear!" he added, changing the subject of his remarks, "I wish I could stay long enough to finish reading this book, and I wish we had some books at home, with something besides sermons in them."

Deacon Cragin, getting impatient for the return of his boys, went to the door and saw them coming. "They've done pretty well," he said to his wife. "If they'd stayed too late, they wouldn't gone again just at present. Jerry likes to go away from home rather too well."

"And he's getting old enough to go," ventured the boy's mother. "He's almost nineteen now, and it wont be but a little while before he'll be twenty-one, and his own man."

"But he'll do as I say, as long as he lives with me, and all the rest of my children too."

"Jerry aint a bad boy."

"I never said he was; but he wants his own way."



"And wouldn't it be best to let him have it in some things? He'd be better contented at home, and more willing to do."

For a wonder, the Deacon didn't say anything about the duty of ruling his own household. He remembered what Mr. Gibson had said to him, and was silent.

The boys came in, when he asked, "How are Mr. Whitney's folks?"

"All well," was the answer.

"Don't you think!" cried Jim, with characteristic earnestness, "they're all temperance down there; and I'm going to be temperance too. I ain't going to look like Mr. Nichols when I'm old, and I know what makes him look so."

"Jim!" emphasized by a stamp of the foot.

"Yes, sir."

"Go to bed, and don't let me hear any more such talk. I hope you'll be as good a man as Mr. Nichols is."

"I hope I shall be a good deal better," muttered Jim, half way up the stairs.



Going to bed was no punishment, and he was just congratulating himself upon having such a nice time to think over what he had read, when he fell asleep, to wake only when the next morning's sun lighted up the low chamber. Even then he rubbed his eyes, winking very hard, to make sure he was at home. In his dreams he had seen an army of old men, with bowed forms, quivering chins, and palsied limbs, all looking very much like Mr. Nichols.

"It must been a dream," said the boy, springing up. "Guess there'll be some of them to meeting to-day though, and if I was the minister, I'd preach them a thundering sermon." He had heard of thundering sermons, and thought they must be effective.

A call from below disturbed his meditations, and as by this time he had completed his simple toilet, he was ready to obey the summons. A Sabbath stillness pervaded the house. There was no unnecessary work or talk. The milking was done, and Deacon



Cragin sat, with the large family Bible open before him, ready to conduct the morning worship. Jim dropped noiselessly into a low chair, vacated by his little sister, who was repaid for this kindness by a seat in his lap.

"Have you learned your verses?" asked his mother, when breakfast was over.

"Yes, ma'm, but I guess I'll look them over again," was the reply. "Pheny wants to have us say every word."

The verses which constituted the Sabbath-school lesson were reviewed and repeated. The boys, who always "walked to meeting," then arrayed themselves in their carefully brushed Sunday suits and left the house. Loitering a little, they were soon overtaken by John and Frank Whitney, who usually improved this opportunity for seeing their neighbors. Naturally, they talked of the subjects which had most interested them the previous evening; and John, whom all considered a very candid young man, expressed himself strongly.



"Mr. Haskell opened my eyes, and since then, Pheny and I have been looking round. I tell you there are a good many drunkards in our town besides them that are called so. I mean to try and have a temperance society in our district this winter, if we don't have one anywhere else. You'll join it, wont you, Jerry?"

"Yes, and be glad to," was answered.

"Why don't you say something to me about it?" asked Jim, looking back with a flash of his dark eyes. "I'm big enough to jine, as old Mr. Nichols says."

"I hadn't got as far as you," replied John. "I should expect you to join, of course. You always like any thing new."

"So I do. I'm tired of old things;" and this said, the progressive boy turned again to his companion.

As these boys walked on they were joined by others from the farm houses, until quite a goodly company of young people wended their way up the hill to the large, old fash-



ioned meeting-house. There, in the porch, cordial greetings and shy glances were exchanged between those who had not met since the last Sabbath ; while many a tell-tale blush revealed some otherwise concealed preference. The minister's appearance interrupted all this, and the congregation followed him into the house.

It was noticed that Mr. Gibson was very pale, looking as though he had passed a sleepless night. His wife too, usually so smiling, seemed to share her husband's trouble, whatever it might be, and hardly raised her eyes from the floor during the whole morning service. Yet the pastor had never preached more earnestly, or prayed more fervently. Indeed, some thought his solemn manner must be induced by some premonition of sickness or death.

At noon several took occasion to speak to him of his health, when he assured them that he was perfectly well. During the intermission the Sabbath-school had its session ;



and the *horse-shed class*, always large in country places, discussed the minister's looks and the morning sermon in the same breath with the crops and weather.

"Mr. Gibson don't preach much like old Parson Grimes, but he's a smart man," said one. "I like him, though he hits hard sometimes. Seems as though he knew our weak pints."

"I guess he does," said another. "But then he preaches gospel truth, and there can't nobody say he don't. For one, I'm willing to take my share, if it does hit hard. There wasn't much smoothing over in Bible times; and I like a man that speaks out what he believes."

"But what if he should tell you a thing was wrong, you'd always thought right?"

"I'd examine into the matter. 'Taint my nature to condemn a thing till I know something about it;" and in justice to the speaker, it should be said that this was true.

If the sermon of the morning had been



plain and direct, that of the afternoon was still more so, and there were few sleepers in the congregation. "What does it mean?" asked one and another, while only Deacon Cragin had any clue to the motives which had prompted such preaching.

The mail of the previous day had brought several letters to Rev. Thomas Gibson, the contents of which had been read and re-read, until they produced their legitimate effect.

"The pulpits of the land must give no uncertain sound in this contest. If need be, we must for the present leave the old way of sermonizing, and speak straight out to our people the terrible facts which are now too well established to be disputed. Every clergyman must feel his responsibility, and every church must hear the truth. What will you do?"

Thus closed one letter, and Mr. Gibson, no longer hesitating, went to his study, not to write a temperance sermon, but to prepare a statement of what he considered a pastor's



duty; thus vindicating, in advance, his future course. After this, no one could doubt his sincerity.

Contrary to his expectation, his refusal of brandy had not been reported, and on Monday, when calling upon one of his parishioners, he had an opportunity to offer the remonstrance of example against the use of alcoholic drinks. His host, a poor man, was much mortified, and hastened to apologize for having nothing better to give his minister.

“Don’t make any excuses,” replied Mr. Gibson. “I would as soon drink this as any kind of liquor. I have done with it all. If your wife will give me a cup of tea, with some bread and cheese, I shall be glad to take supper with you.”

This healed all wounded feelings; and after a long talk, in which the pastor gave his reasons for the change in his habits, they sat down to a table spread with the best the house afforded.

“I do enjoy a good cup of tea, Mrs. Bar-



rett; and these cream biscuits are good enough to be eaten without butter or cheese;" said the visitor, sipping his tea with evident relish. "I've heard some of our farmers talk about the high price of tea; but they spend more for liquor than would keep them well supplied with this cheering beverage."

"To be sure they do," replied Mrs. Barrett, whose heart had been won by the praise of her biscuit.

"I know they do," added her husband, after some consideration. "We're poor folks, and have to live pretty close, with so many mouths to feed; though there aint one too many," he added, looking round upon his children, with a smile. "We think we can't afford to use much tea; and wife goes without it a good many times, when 'twould do her good. But I take a little spirit every day, and never thought about the cost. What say, Sally, shall we give up the spirit?"

"That's for you to say," was the reply. "I don't take none, only washing-days, and when



I don't feel well. I don't care nothing about it any way."

"Well, we'll see," said Mr. Barrett. "We haint got much in the house; and if the minister can get along, without spirit, I guess I can."

Here then was a little encouragement, although nothing was really decided. Mr. Barrett's was not the only poor family who were denied many of the comforts of life, in order that decanter and jug might be well supplied.

The next day Mr. Gibson went to Mr. Whitney's, and here he found those who were ready and willing to stay up his hands.

"Here's Pheny been wanting to talk with you about this temperance movement," said her father. "She's pretty much engaged about it, and I've concluded to let her have her way here at home. She wont drink liquor herself, and she don't want to give it to anybody else."

"I am glad of it," was the hearty reply. "People have been putting the cup to their own and their neighbors' lips long enough."



"You talked with Cousin Haskell, when he was here last summer," remarked Mr. Whitney.

"Yes, sir, I did; and was glad to hear that something is being done to stay the tide of intemperance. We are behind the times here."

"So he said, and also said a great many other things I never thought of before, though I know they're true. There are men in town that were called smart and promising when they were young, that have turned out bad; and the smartest seem to be the worst. Then we've got a good many that think they mean to do right, that are hard and cross in their families. Now it's my belief, since I've thought this matter over, that the cider and liquor they drink makes them cross."

"No doubt of it," responded Mr. Gibson; "all alccholic drinks make the nerves over sensitive, unless they stupefy the drinker; and I am quite sure we should have less scolding if we had less drinking."



## CHAPTER III.

## THE FIRST TEMPERANCE SERMON.



THE next Sabbath was one of those rare days which glorify a New England autumn, and throw a veil of beauty over every feature of the landscape. A soft haze rested upon the far off hills, while in the clear, pure atmosphere, others were revealed in all the wealth of form and color. Gray rocks, shaded nooks where lingered summer's verdure, and wooded heights, blended in one grand picture, which Nature offered to the admiring gaze of her worshippers.

It may be that in this primitive town there were few who saw with poet's or artist's eye; but there were many that morning conscious of an exaltation of feeling, at which, in their simplicity, they half wondered.



"A pleasant day," said one and another.  
"There'll be a good many folks out to-day."

Mr. Gibson himself expected a larger congregation than usual; and in this he was not disappointed. The perfect weather lured forth both young and old, and every family in the parish was represented. Those who loved doctrine were feasted; and then, before the doctrine was forgotten, they listened to a sermon so eminently practical, that no one could fail to make a personal application of its truths. These had to do with their every-day lives; and all know that it is easier to assent to abstract theories than to acknowledge our own imperfections. Men who could talk of foreordination and free-will with the utmost assurance, were restless when told that patience, forbearance and humility were the cardinal virtues of a Christian.

Possibly, however, the mere assertion of this fact would have produced little effect; but Mr. Gibson made sure that his words were not like water, spilled upon the ground. These vir-



tues were to be exercised in all the relations of life, both at home and abroad; and when a Christian failed so to exercise them, religion was dishonored, and the power of the church weakened.

Deacon Cragin heard every word of the two sermons, and saw his sins as never before. Jim was sure the minister meant some one in particular that day, and looked around for the old men he had seen in his dream. Some of them he recognized, and wondered if they understood the sermon. Anyway he hoped his father did; though his father hadn't been so cross lately.

These thoughts passed through the boy's mind while the choir was singing, and then came the announcement of meetings for the week.

"Wednesday afternoon, at two o'clock, Rev. Mr. Safford will preach in this house, from the text, 'Do thyself no harm.' I trust there will be a full attendance from all parts of the town; and I would suggest to the



heads of families, that, if possible, work be so arranged no one need remain at home."

Mr. Safford was so universally respected for his learning and piety, that it was hardly necessary to bespeak for him a large audience. This announcement was the first intimation of the meeting, not even the deacons having been consulted in regard to it; but Mr. Gibson made no explanation. He pronounced the benediction, and the people went their way.

"Have you any idea what this meeting is for?" asked Pheny Whitney of her father.

"Nothing in particular, I guess," was the reply. "I suppose the minister hopes some good may be done by an extra sermon."

"But Mr. Safford is a temperance man," said Pheny. "Bashy Turner told me about it. She's been at work up to the north part of the town, and she saw somebody that belongs to Mr. Safford's church. Perhaps he's going to preach about temperance on Wednesday. I hope he is, and we must all go."



“Certain, child. I wouldn’t miss it for a good deal. But don’t say a word about temperance, for fear folks will stay away.”

Farmers and farmer’s wives were at work early on Wednesday morning, that all things might be done in season. People were punctual, and at the time appointed, Mr. Safford rose before a large congregation and invoked the blessing of God to rest down upon them. The choir sung an anthem in their best style, followed by reading of the Scriptures, and a long prayer, after which the sermon was commenced.

An hour and a half Mr. Safford spoke of the sin and folly of intemperance. There was a slight movement among the people when his subject was fully understood, and a few ventured to express their dissatisfaction by coughing; but the pause which succeeded, with the calm, steady gaze of the speaker, soon silenced this.

“Three hundred thousand drunkards in our land! Is it not time that some one sound



a note of warning? Three hundred thousand drunkards moving in sad procession to dishonored graves! Is it not time that something be done to stay the tide of intemperance?

“Perhaps you will say, ‘*We* are not drunkards. *We* are not intemperate. *We* only take what we need, and what we drink in company.’ But, my friends, you don’t need one drop of alcoholic liquor when you are in health. More—every drop you drink injures you, soul and body.”

How the quivering chins quivered, and the trembling limbs trembled! Did not they who bore these infirmities know that they had never been injured by the use of alcoholic liquor? Had it not helped them, all the way through life?

Mr. Safford could read these questions in their faces, and hastened to answer them in the negative, bringing forward abundant evidence to prove the same.

“In summer you drink liquor to help you



endure the heat; in winter, to help you bear the cold; in the morning you drink to tone up your stomach; before eating, to give you an appetite; after eating, to promote digestion; and then, again, before retiring for the night, to make you sleep soundly. If a friend comes in you drink with him, and if you go to the store to buy goods, you drink there. This is intemperance."

Bathsheba Turner, the tailoress of the town, who, in her yearly pilgrimages from house to house, could not fail to see what was the bane of so many families, nodded her head emphatically, whispering to her neighbor, "That's true as the Bible."

This was when the great majority of the people were ignorant of the real effect of alcohol upon the human system. They did not know it was a poison, vitiating the blood and destroying the brain; consequently Mr. Safford's sermon contained much statistical information, which startled his hearers as a new revelation.



In closing, he addressed himself to the young, urging them to take higher ground than their fathers had done. He considered the great expense of such universal drinking, and the poverty which resulted. Finally, he he appealed to all—young and old, rich and poor, men, women, and children, to come out on the Lord's side, and help to rid the country of its greatest enemy.

No one thought of the time while he was speaking, but when he sat down, those who had watches consulted them, and were surprised to find that it was so late.

Mr. Gibson rose, and after expressing the interest with which he had listened to the sermon, said: "It is proposed that a temperance society be formed here; and after the benediction is pronounced, we will adjourn to the town-house for that purpose. Brother Safford has some experience in forming such societies, and will address us upon the subject."

This was going faster and farther than was



at all consistent with the character of Hardhack people, but the doors of the town-house stood invitingly open; and many who would have deliberated for weeks, had there been opportunity, and then decided squarely against all innovation, entered.

A few turned their faces resolutely homeward; and, in some cases, families were divided. Old Mr. Nichols was horrified at what he had heard, although previous to this Mr. Safford had been to him as an oracle. What had been said was "agin natur and Scriptur, both;" and he wouldn't countenance a society to take away folks' liberty. He was going home, and he commanded his household to accompany him. "I'm going to stay and see this out, and Jane thinks she'll stay with me," said his son. "As for the children, they can do as they're a mind to, though one of the boys may go home with you, and take the horse back."

"Ezry!" cried the old man, half choked with rage; but "Ezry" had made up his



mind, and it was of no use to speak in that tone. Neither did the complaint of "a terrible feelin of goneness in the stomach" move the son's heart.

"Tell Matthew to git up the horse, then, and I'll try to ride home, though its hard to be turned off so, in my old age."

"I want Matthew at the meeting," was the reply. "He's old enough to understand what he hears, and Joe can drive for you."

Mr. Nichols shook his head, while his chin dropped lower, and his eyes grew more watery. "Guess I'd better go into Mr. Sprague's and git a little somethin warmin for my stomach, fore I start," he said.

"You had better go right home now," said his daughter-in-law, whose mental vision had improved during the last two hours. "It aint far to go, and Joe ought to be at the meeting. I want all the boys to hear what's said."

"Come, father, decide quick what you'll do," added his son. "We don't want to stand



here, and be in the way. Will you go, or stay?"

"I'll go," he answered; and very unwillingly, Joe got into the wagon to drive off. His mother told him he need not be gone long; but his grandfather took care of that. The horse must walk every step of the way, although one would suppose that, under the circumstances, the old man would be anxious to reach home as soon as possible. At last the boy was released, and you may be sure it required but a short time for him to drive to the village, and make his way into the town-house.

"I think we'd best adjourn," some one was saying. "There aint time to discuss the matter to-night; and I for one, haint thought enough about it to make up my mind."

Mr. Whitney rose, before any motion for adjourning could be made. "It seems to me that we have heard enough this afternoon, to convince any candid man of the evils of dram-drinking. I move that as many as see



fit, sign their names to the paper Mr. Gibson has read, and so help form a temperance society in this place."

"I second the motion, and there's no need putting it to vote," said Deacon Cragin. "If anybody wants to sign the paper, there's liberty; and if anybody don't want to, there's liberty not to."

"Perhaps folks'd like to hear the constitoo-tion agin, and know what they're asked to jine," remarked an elderly man in the back part of the house.

"I will read it again," said Mr. Gibson; and after the reading he wrote his own name under the constitution, as it was termed. His wife added her signature. Mr. Whitney's family waited for an opportunity to join the society, while near them stood Deacon Cragin and his wife, Mr. and Mrs. Barrett, and Ezra Nichols, with his wife. Jerry and Ira Cragin came up, and so soon as there was room around the table, Jim made his appearance, with four other boys about his own



age. None of these boys could write very well, but they could read their own names, and the minister could remember who they were, so there would be no trouble on that score.

Some other names were added, and at the close of the meeting over thirty signatures were counted, which was far better than Mr. Gibson had dared to hope. Yet of these thirty, less than half were those of professing Christians; and of the five deacons of the church, only one had given his influence in favor of the new movement. Two went home without even entering the town-house; while two sat silent, with knit brows and compressed lips. They had neither part nor lot in this matter; but the pastor knew that the time would come when they would talk. Never were people taken more by surprise than was this people, and when the meeting was dismissed they could hardly realize what had transpired.

"Not much of a society neither," said one.



"More'n half on 'em as signed are women and children."

"Well, what of that?" asked Bathsheba Turner, who had overheard this remark. "What you goin to do about it? Kill 'em off, and leave the men folks to do their own cookin and chores?"

"Dear me!" thought the man who had spoken. "I shant hear the last of that in a hurry. She never forgits nothin."

She never did, although she would have counted it a mercy to forget much which lay in the past. She was one who joined the temperance society, gladly wishing only that such a society had been formed a score of years before. Jim Cragin, who was a great favorite with Bashy, as Miss Turner was called, interrupted her by asking when she was coming to make his new clothes.

"Next week; and we'll have a temperance talk when I come," she answered.

"Yes, ma'am. I'm all ready for that. I know most all Mr. Safford's sermon, and I'll



tell you about my dream. Guess you'll have a good time at our house now. We don't have much scolding, and I guess we shan't have any after this. I've found out what makes folks cross."

Jim was gone, and Bashy started for the place she called home, about a mile from the village. In her walk, one after another joined her, all expressing their opinion of what had occurred, some approving, and some disapproving.

"I shouldn't thought Mr. Gibson would took such a step without counsel. 'Taint accordin to our way of doin things. He ought to brought it afore the church, and seen what they said. I can't fellowship sich doctrine. 'Taint accordin to Scriptur."

"What aint accordin to Scriptur?" asked Bashy, looking full in the face of the man who had thus spoken.

"Why, condemn the good things God's given us. Paul told Timothy to take a little wine, for his stomach's sake."



“Well, what if he did! Is that any reason why you men folks should be sloppin down liquor from mornin till night, till you’re cross as so many Injuns? For my part, I’ve seen enough of that, and I guess there’s somethin to folks besides stomachs; though you’d think there wasn’t, to hear so much complainin of that member. I’m glad Mr. Gibson didn’t go round askin everybody what he’d better do. Taint no use talkin forever. Better go to work and do somethin.”

“Well, well, Bashy, I didn’t say nothin agin you. You needn’t take it up so. I’m willin you should jine the temperance society.”

“Willin!” she repeated scornfully. “Taint nobody’s business what I do about such things. There now, don’t say nothing more to provoke me;” she added. “I don’t want to git all riled up, now I’m goin home to rest.”

“I’m glad you’re goin to rest a little, Bashy;” remarked an elderly woman walking by her side. “Guess you need it. You’ve



been to work ever since you was high as a hoppin toad."

"That's what I have, and if it hadn't been for rum I'd had a good mother to keep me company; and then 'twouldn't be hard to work. But I aint goin to complain. The Lord gives me strength, and I aint beholdin to anybody for a livin."

"That's what Deacon Cragin's wife said the last time I see her. Says she, Bashy Turner aint beholden to nobody. She earns all she gits, and more too."

"Women folks generally do earn mor'n they get. I've noticed that a good many times;" was the sententious reply. "Guess Deacon Cragin's goin to turn over a new leaf, and I'm glad of it. I expect, though, there'll be music round Mr. Gibson's ears for a spell."

"I'm afraid this afternoon's work'll injure his influence among us," now remarked one of the company. "He ought to considered."

"He's considered enough;" responded



Bashy. "You needn't say nothin about that. Other folks have considered too. I tell you we don't know every thing here in Hardhack. There's other towns knows more, and they've got temperance societies."

These are specimens of the comments made that evening; except that in some groups all were alike ready to condemn what they had seen and heard.

At the parsonage, Mr. Safford congratulated his young brother upon the successful inauguration of the great reform in their midst. "You may consider the question now fairly settled," he said.

"I am fairly committed," was the reply. "But the battle is yet to be fought, and I shall meet the strongest opposition among my own church members."

"Don't be discouraged, Brother Gibson. The Lord is on our side, and sooner or later the people must see it. It wont do for the watchmen to cry peace, when there is an enemy within the camp. I wonder that we



have not been roused to battle with this enemy before."

"It is strange ; and stranger still, that so few believe what they are told of the extent of this evil," responded Mr. Gibson. "It is nearly two years since my attention was called to this subject. Since then I have improved my opportunities for observation, and I am convinced that the use of alcoholic liquors works evil, and that continually. It is my belief that more people break down from hard drinking than hard work."

"There is no doubt of it," exclaimed Mr. Safford. "I know it to be true ; and we must be careful to do our whole duty, that the blood of others may not be found upon our skirts."





## CHAPTER IV.

## CONFERENCE OF DEACONS.



HERE was a general curiosity in regard to Mr. Nichols. Every one knew that he had a strong appetite for "ardent spirits;" and every body knew that, Christian or not, he was sometimes partially intoxicated. People did not say just this. He was "a little fuddled;" or "he had taken more than was good for him;" but whatever was said, the same fact was expressed.

When his son reached home there sat the old man in an arm-chair, smoking, and wearing his most forbidding aspect. The boys came in, exchanged their Sunday suits for working garments, and went to the barn. Mother and daughters commenced preparing



for supper, while not a word was said of what was uppermost in their thoughts.

Ezra Nichols was very unlike his father, having inherited a gentle, loving disposition from the mother, who had meekly borne her lot of trial and hardship. Yet he could be firm and decided when occasion required, and where principle was at stake. The subject presented that afternoon was one to which his attention had been called by Mr. Whitney. He listened with interest, and accepting the facts, did not hesitate in regard to his duty. Of course, the old man complained of his stomach, and his loneliness; had no appetite for supper, and refused everything which was offered to him. The boys were rather impatient for the explosion, which they knew would come, when "gransir" got ready; and their mother watched them closely, lest there might be some provocation on their part.

"What did you do in the town-house, Ezry?"



“Formed a temperance society,” was the reply.

“Did anybody jine it?”

“Yes, sir; more than thirty.”

“Who was they?” asked the old man, in great perturbation; and the names of the members were repeated, Joe assisting his father to recall them.

“You say Deacon Cragin jined?”

“Yes, sir.”

“And you, Ezry?”

“Yes, sir; and Jane, and all the children that can write their names. We’re going to be a temperate family, and the money’s going to buy books instead of liquor.”

“You don’t say you aint goin to buy no more spirit, Ezry?”

“Only what’s needed for medicines;” and his father drew a long breath of relief as this was said.

Presently he commenced what he called “an argooment” against Mr. Safford’s sermon, in which argument the words “scrip-



tur" and liberty occurred many times. "It's a free country," he reiterated, with trembling voice. "You've signed away your liberty. I've got eenamost through with this world; but while I do live, I should be thankful for sich creetur comforts as I need."

"Father, there aint any reason why you should talk this way," said his son. "You can have all the spirit you need; but as for me and my house, we've done with it."

"Children against their parents! 'Taint accordin to Scriptur or natur; but 'twas prophesied to come in the last days. I'm eenamost through."

"You may live many years yet," was the reply; and here the matter rested for that evening.

Mr. Gibson had "stirred up a hornet's nest," as Bashy Turner said, and never was such buzzing heard in Hardhack before. One would have supposed that the liberties of the people were threatened, so much boasting was there of the inalienable rights



of man to eat and drink as he pleased. The four deacons were especially indignant.

"Mad as hornets," Bashy said; and she had a good opportunity to judge.

Deacon Flanders invited his three brethren and their wives, to drink tea at his house on Saturday afternoon, and take counsel together upon the "alarmin state of things." Deacon Cragin was not included in this invitation; although a week previous, his presence would have been considered indispensable.

The state of things was alarming, indeed, when four deacons of a Christian church would meet for the express purpose of encouraging each other in the use of alcoholic liquor. But the best laid plans are often defeated, and Providence was pleased to send a preacher of temperance into their very midst; one to whom, of all others, they would feel constrained to listen.

This preacher, Mrs. Holden, the wife of the storekeeper at the corner, was a woman of more than ordinary intelligence and energy,



and not having been brought up in Hardhack, had no particular reverence for its faults.

"There's Mrs. Holden sure's I live," exclaimed Mrs. Willey, dropping her knitting, and going to the window. "If I'd known she was coming I'd put on another gown."

"Guess she wasn't invited," said Mrs. Campbell. "Leastways, I didn't hear nothing said about it. I'm glad she's come, though. She's a nice woman, and I want to get her receipt for making loaf cake."

"I'm always glad to see her; but I'm afraid there'll be hard words if she stays," said Mrs. Willey. "You know she aint afraid to speak her mind, if she's called on; and she joined the society Wednesday."

"Wonder what her husband said to that," chimed in Mrs. Porter, who had no higher thought than to do as "the deacon said."

"O, he wouldn't say any thing," was the reply. "There hasn't been any liquor in Holden's store for two weeks, and I guess it's her doings."



Deacon Flanders and his wife went to the door, and notwithstanding the company present, insisted that Mrs. Holden should stop. But no sooner was she in the house, than she understood her position as an uninvited guest in a conclave of anti-temperance deacons. Decanters and glasses were on the kitchen table; and she was soon aware that the ladies had not been omitted in the distribution of good things.

Directly after she was seated in the parlor Deacon Flanders offered her a glass of wine.

"I joined the temperance society Wednesday, and can't drink liquor of any kind," said Mrs. Holden, after properly acknowledging the courtesy.

"But it's nothing but wine. Wine never hurt any body," urged the deacon.

This opened the way for a general conversation, while knitting-needles clicked a cheerful accompaniment to animated voices.

"Well, now, I want to ask you if it's a fact



your husband don't have no liquor in his store?" asked Mr. Flanders.

"'Tis a fact," answered the storekeeper's wife. "I can tell you how it came about, if you'd like to know. It wasn't any of Mr. Gibson's work; so you needn't blame him."

"Whose work was it?" asked Deacon Willey.

"One of our church members; and there's quite a story to it, if it was all told."

"Let's hear it, Mrs. Holden," said Deacon Flanders. "We've met to consult on the matter of temperance, and we're willing to hear both sides."

"Well, you know when my husband is away from home I go into the store to wait upon customers, and I'm willing to; but I never was willing to deal out liquor. I told my husband so, to begin with. I didn't believe in it, and I don't now, though I did it to please him."

Poor Mrs. Willey's knitting-needles clicked louder than ever at this, and a long row of



stitches was dropped. The deacon cleared his throat, but Mrs. Holden proceeded with an air which seemed to say, "Now I've began, I'm going through—story, comments, and all."

"About two weeks ago Mr. Holden went off early in the morning, leaving me to take care of the store. I hadn't more than got the dishes done up, after breakfast, before I saw one of our church members drive down into the mill-yard, and unhitch his horse from the wagon, as spry as anybody, though he aint very young. He had a boy with him, and the first I knew, he came into the store all doubled up, with his hand on his stomach, complaining of a terrible pain, and wanted me to fix him something warm. I was willing to do that. If the poor man was sick, he needed something; and I fixed it, just as good as I could; and it *was* good, for I tasted of it. He smacked his lips over it, and paid me; and then went out to piling over boards. He worked steady all the forenoon, front of my



kitchen windows, where I could see him, and I thought his medicine must have done him a heap of good."

"I've no doubt on't, Mrs. Holden. There's nothin so good as sperit to warm up the stomach."

"I haint finished my story yet."

"Well, Mrs. Holden, we'll hear the rest."

"At noon that man got out his luncheon, and he and the boy ate a good hearty dinner. Didn't seem to be any more sick than I am now; but pretty soon he came into the store with his hand on his stomach, just as he had in the morning;" and here the narrator of the story illustrated it, in a way which convulsed her hearers with laughter. "He was in dreadful pain, and wanted me to fix him up another glass of somethin warmin. What I gave him in the mornin went right to the seat of his diffikilty, and made him all over. Well, I didn't believe in his sickness any more than you would, if you'd been there; but I fixed him a dose, and he dranked it."



"Now, do tell us who the man was!" exclaimed Mrs. Flanders.

"No, I shan't call any names; but I aint through with my story yet. That man went out and worked all the afternoon straight as anybody, though he'd been bent up most double when he come into the store. He worked till sundown. Then he put his horse into the wagon, and turned round, ready to start for home, and then came into the store and wanted some more bitters. The pain in his stomach had come on again, and he didn't feel as though he could get home without taking something to relieve him. Says he, 'Mrs. Holden, you're the best hand to fix up a dose of bitters I ever see;' but I didn't care any thing about that. I didn't hurrury any about waiting upon him either, but he grew sick so fast, I finally give him something and he dranked it, though I could tell by his looks that he knew I'd left out the best of the seasoning. Now Nate Barnes and Sam Buffy wouldn't pretended to



be sick if they'd come to me for a dram. They'd told the truth, and to my mind that's the best way. That's what I told my husband that night; and I told him, too, that I'd never deal out another drop of liquor in the store as long as I lived. He had some on hand, and he carried it into the cellar. That's how we come to give up having liquor in the store."

The women of the company looked at Mrs. Holden with astonishment, the men, with confusion, and for a time nothing was said. At length, Deacon Porter broke the silence.

"I'm of a mind, Mrs. Holden, that the man felt bad when he come to you for something warm."

"I'm of the same mind, deacon. He felt bad, just as Nate Barnes does when he wants a dram. He hankered after some liquor, as Bashy Turner says, and I guess that's the way with most all drinkers."

"Why, Mrs. Holden!" exclaimed Mrs. Porter, "I don't see how you can talk so.



Most all our folks take a little spirit, and you don't s'pose it's cause they like it, do you?"

"It's my opinion they wouldn't drink it if they didn't like it," was the reply. Folks don't take what they don't like three or four times every day, unless they're obliged to."

"But, Mrs. Holden"—and here Deacon Flanders paused, wiping his forehead with a large bandanna handkerchief, which he used only on grand occasions—"seems to me you don't look at this in the right light. We mean to be temperate, as our fathers was before us. They was good men."

"Some of them, deacon. I suppose you mean the fathers of the town."

"Yes; they're what I mean."

"But I've heard there were drunkards here forty years ago."

"There was the Ransoms," Deacon Campbell hastened to say. "They always kept liquor in the house, and they was good men."

"No doubt of it, deacon. They lived up to



the light they had; and if they had lived till Wednesday, I've no doubt they'd been the first to join the temperance society."

"They want men to take up new things, without considerin," was the reply.

"No more are their sons, but they joined the temperance society."

Every time Mrs. Holden said "temperance society," a nervous tremor ran through the company; and yet, as she uttered the most disagreeable truths with a smiling face, no one could be offended. Speaking frankly, if called upon, she did not intrude her opinions; and when the deacons seemed inclined to confine the discussion to themselves, she talked of other matters with their wives.

Cases of sickness in different parts of the town were now reported, and housekeeping experiences compared. Mrs. Campbell obtained the recipe for making loaf cake, and at the tea-table there was such an exchange of culinary knowledge, that a moderately



sized cook-book might have been compiled by a listener.

Supper over, Mrs. Holden took her leave, when host, hostess, and invited guests all breathed more freely. "A smart woman," said Deacon Flanders, after seeing her started homewards.

"Yes, she's all that; but she's got a way of thinking for herself, that aint quite accordin to Scriptur, as I read it."

"There aint a woman in town that tries harder to do right than she does," said Mrs. Campbell, moved to speak by this reference to Scripture. "She has the fear of God before her eyes, and I've heard her husband say that if he was ever as good as his wife, he should be satisfied. I'm most of her mind about drinking, after hearing her talk; and I wish our boys would join the temperance society. They'd be sure not be drunkards then," and the good woman sighed as she thought of those who called her mother.

"You needn't worry about our boys,"



answered the deacon. "I'm able to manage them. I aint a bit afraid of their being drunkards."

Yet every one in the company, except himself, knew that his oldest son had been intoxicated within a week. The pledge might save him; but his father had forbidden his entering the town-house on Wednesday.

"Mrs. Willey, have you seen she that was Loizy Huntoon since she come back to her mother's?" asked Mrs. Flanders, anxious to change the subject of conversation.

"No, I haint," was the reply. "I've been meanin to go over, but there's somethin happened every day to make me put it off. Have you been?"

"Yes; I was there last week."

"Well, do tell how she is. I hain't seen nobody but Mrs. Huntoon, and I didn't want to say much to her. She must be feelin bad."

"She is; and Loizy too, though they didn't talk about their troubles."



"Loizy didn't make out very well gettin married," remarked one of the men. "Her husband is too shiftless to git a livin."

"That aint the worst of it, though that's bad enough," said Mrs. Campbell. "Her husband is a drunkard, and he abused her till she couldn't bear it no longer. I call that a warnin against drinkin liquor."

"Mrs. Campbell," exclaimed her husband, "you needn't have no trouble about liquor, I told you I'd manage the boys. I'm able to."

"I hope you be," she answered, without looking up from her work.

There was a prospect of mutiny in the camp, and the deacons adjourned to the kitchen to see what should be done. The children were sent to stay with their mother. Decanters and glasses were placed upon the table, and after a *spirited*, and by no means *dry* consultation, it was decided to lose no opportunity for opposing a movement which threatened the liberties of the people. They



knew that alcoholic liquor was one of the gifts of God, and if it was sometimes abused, so were other gifts. Folks ought to know, themselves, when they'd drunked enough; and Mr. Gibson must be told that he was out of place in what he'd done.

"Perhaps 'twould be best to visit him," said one. "He don't know how the people feel about it."





## CHAPTER V.

## DEACON CAMPBELL'S CONVERSION.



THE same Saturday afternoon Deacon Cragin, Ezra Nichols, Mr. Whitney, four of the Ransoms, and Mr. Barrett called at the parsonage to assure Mr. Gibson of their support in whatever he might see fit to do for the promotion of temperance.

"The first thing to be done is to organize a society," said the clergyman. "We only signed the pledge on Wednesday. There was so much opposition that it didn't seem best to take a voice of the meeting as to forming a society."

"It wasn't best," replied Deacon Cragin. "I could tell that by looking round. But there's enough of us together now to organize a society as it ought to be."

"Then let us proceed to business," said one



of the Ransoms; and before they separated, a constitution had been adopted, and officers chosen. Deacon Cragin was president, Mr. Whitney, vice-president, and John Ransom secretary.

"Now we will get those who signed the pledge to subscribe to this constitution, and then we shall be in good working order," remarked Mr. Gibson. "We must have a meeting of all the members of the society, and decide what is best to be done."

"Will you read a notice to-morrow?" asked John Ransom.

"Certainly," was the reply. "I didn't enter this field without counting the cost."

Deacon Cragin remained after the other gentlemen had left, and when alone with his pastor, expressed his gratitude for the reproof, which a few weeks before had been so kindly administered. "I needed it," he said. "I was a stumbling-block in the way of sinners, and a tyrant in my family. I see it now; and, Mr. Gibson, 'twas time I give



up drinking. I found that out as soon as I left off. I missed it, and if I'd gone on, I might just been as bad as Sam Buffy or Nate Barnes. I dranked more and more all the time."

"Yes, deacon, I saw that," was the reply. "I've been looking round, with my eyes wide open, the last two years; and I made up my mind that a good many of our church members are hard drinkers."

"They are, Mr. Gibson, and we've got a good many downright drunkards among us. My wife and I counted them up yesterday, and we made out over forty, young and old."

"That is more than I calculated," responded the pastor.

"I think we are right," said Deacon Cragin. "A good many more too have died within ten years. There was Bashy Turner's father, one of the worst there ever was in town. That girl knows what 'tis to have a hard time. Her father had a good farm, and run it through, till he hadn't a shelter over



his head. His wife, poor woman, was all discouraged with hard work and hard treatment, and she died of consumption. She was a pitiful object the last of her days; but she was a Christian, and ready to go. She had a little rest here too. The neighbors found a comfortable room for her and Bashy, where Bashy lives now."

"And who took care of Mr. Turner?"

"The neighbors, when he wouldn't work; and after his wife died, Bashy paid his board, though she wouldn't live with him. He wanted to keep house, but she was of age, and could do as she was a mind to. She went to work, and paid back all that was done for her mother, and then took care of her father three years. He froze to death at last, and I don't know as anybody was sorry."

"I've heard something of that before," remarked Mr. Gibson. "I noticed Bashy signed her name with a will."

"She'd be sure to do that. I don't think she's tasted a drop of liquor this five years."



"Then she has been an exception to the general rule."

"Yes, she has, and there haint anybody talked to her about it either. They knew better. Bashy's able to give a reason for the faith that's in her, and it's generally a good reason too. I depend on her to do more for the temperance cause than anybody in the town, unless it's our minister. She goes everywhere, and people trust her good sense, if her tongue is sharp."

A little more talk upon different subjects, and Deacon Cragin rose to go, when he asked abruptly, "What shall I do, when such a man as old Mr. Nichols comes to my house? He always expects something to drink."

"Put not the glass to thy neighbor's lips," said Mr. Gibson; and thus the question was answered.

The next day there was read from the pulpit a notice of a meeting of the temperance society. All those who had already joined, and all who were interested in the cause of



temperance, were earnestly invited to meet in the school-house of district number one, on Wednesday evening, at early candle lighting.

As none but the initiated dreamed of this, there was great surprise among the outsiders. Deacon Porter nodded across the aisle to Deacon Flanders; and Deacon Willey turned quite around in his seat to see what effect this announcement had upon his brethren. Deacon Campbell, unlike the others, looked straight forward, while his face flushed, and his hands moved nervously.

When the services were over, Deacon Flanders said to him, "We ought to meet and decide on something, and we'd best get together somewhere on Wednesday."

"I shall be busy then," was the answer. "You'll have to get along without me."

"Well, can we count on you to help in anything we decide on?"

"You can count on me to do what I think's duty;" and saying this, Deacon Campbell waited for nothing more.



Then the three other deacons were in a state of greater perplexity than ever. It couldn't be that the very strongest of their number would fail them in the hour of need. Some one suggested the possibility of a headache; and this was accepted as an excuse for otherwise inexplicable conduct.

Deacon Campbell had passed through a sad experience since he left Deacon Flanders, the evening before, self-confident and resolute. His wife's thoughts had been so quickened by what she had heard, that she resolved in some way to bring her boys into the movement; and for that reason she urged her husband to think seriously before he joined in opposing the minister. If Horace should get to drinking, as a good many young people of his age do, 'twould be a dreadful blow to us all."

"I aint afraid," the father began to say, but pausing, he did say, "I hope there aint no danger. I never see him the worse for liquor; did you, Polly?"



"Yes, I have," and these words were uttered by the mother with a groan.

"You must be mistaken."

"No I aint; I wish I was. Other folks have seen him so too."

"Then I'll try the effect of a horsewhip on him," exclaimed the deacon, angry that his son should be intoxicated.

"No, John, don't do that, if you care anything for me, or the boy either. You learnt him to drink; and if he can't bear as much as you can, whose fault is it? It's time for you to look to yourself."

"Wife!"

"Husband!"

"I'm going to rule my own household."

"In the fear of the Lord," she added. "'Ye fathers, provoke not your children to wrath.' Horace wont take a horsewhipping from you, and 'taint right he should. You'd better pray over this matter, and see what light you'll get from the Lord."

It did seem to the deacon that the whole



order of things was being reversed, and he sat silent for a moment; after which, he indulged in an angry tirade, which it is not necessary for me to transcribe.

"You'd better pray over the matter," his wife replied. "If Horace is ever made better, 'twon't be by drivin, I can tell you that;" and growing bolder, as she realized the danger which threatened her first-born, she added: "You ought to set a good example before your children. If you'll give up the use of liquor, I guess there won't be no trouble with Horace."

"Mrs. Campbell, I'll have a settlement with that boy fore I go to bed to-night. So you needn't say no more about it. I understand managin boys."

They were nearly home, when they passed Horace with two young men of the neighborhood. "I'll learn him to keep different company," muttered his father, and driving rapidly, he had put his horse in the stable, and was waiting at the door when his son came up.



"I want you at the barn," he said. "You and I've got a job to settle."

"What is it?" asked Horace, staggering, although he had not drank half the quantity of liquor which maddened his father.

"I'll tell you when we get there," and wishing to accelerate movements, the deacon gave his son a push from the house.

Horace fell, uttering a cry of pain, and the whole family rushed out to learn the cause.

"Go back," said Deacon Campbell, "there aint nothin the matter;" and the children retreated.

Not so the mother. She bent over her son, and by the light of the lantern, saw his pale face and motionless form. "You've killed him!" she cried, in sudden terror. "You've killed my boy! Go away, and leave me alone with him." Then regaining composure, she said, "Bring me some water, quick, some of you children!" and by this time she had pillowed the dear head upon her lap. "God



forgive you for this, John Campbell, I never will!"

"Horace! Horace! Speak to me! He can't be dead, Polly. Tell me he aint dead! O God, forgive me, and spare my child!"

Water sprinkled upon the face of the prostrate boy caused him to open his eyes, and directly, as blood gushed from the wound on his head, he became conscious.

"Mother!" he murmured.

"Yes, mother is here," she answered, in the same low tone which had soothed him when he scarce could lisp her name. "Mother will take care of you."

"O, my dear mother!" and he clasped one of her hands between his own. "My head aches, and I'm so dizzy,"

"I'll carry him in," said Deacon Campbell, stooping to raise him from the ground.

"No, no!" exclaimed the mother. "You've done enough. George, you and I'll carry him in. We'll lay him on the settle; and you, Fanny, bring a pillow."



The father was so shocked and stunned that he stood aside while this was done. Then Mrs. Campbell cut away the matted hair, and exposed a cruel gash, cut by the sharp corner of a stone.

"What made it so?" asked the younger children, in a whisper. "Is Horace goin to die?"

"I hope not," was the reply. "Go to the chest and get that roll of linen that's under the till. Bring me some more water too."

The door of the east room was opened noiselessly, and when it was closed, a man knelt within, praying for mercy. "Spare my son!" he cried. "Take whatever else thou wilt, but spare my son, and make the path of duty plain before me."

Not once, but many times was this petition repeated, until he who prayed dared again to meet his family.

"Hadn't the children better go to bed, wife?" he asked; and she, divining his thoughts, answered, "I guess 'twould be



best. Go now, children, and if you're wanted, I'll call you."

Reluctantly, they obeyed, and when all were gone Deacon Campbell went to the settle on which lay his son.

"Horace!"

"Mother!" called the boy, reaching out his hand, as if for protection, while an involuntary shudder passed over his frame. "Do not leave me, mother."

"No, child, I won't. But your father spoke to you."

"I know it," was the reply.

"My son! My son! Won't you speak to me? I've been wrong, and I ask your forgiveness. Forgive me, my son."

Horace Campbell would have been flogged to death without shedding a single tear; but this completely subdued him, and throwing his arms around his father's neck, he wept like a child.

"Say you forgive me, my son."

"I'm the one to be forgiven," was the reply.



"No! Say you forgive me."

"Yes, I do, father; and will you forgive me?" sobbed the boy.

"O, yes, Horace, and for time to come, we'll both try and do better than we have."

"I'll try, father; and mother—where is she?"

"Right here," but the voice which answered was so choked no one could have recognized it.

"Wife, you'll forgive me, now Horace has?"

"Yes, John, and I shouldn't spoke so. But I thought you'd killed him."

Only an hour—but in that hour these three seemed to have lived a lifetime.





## CHAPTER VI.

## A TEMPERANCE MEETING.



WEDNESDAY evening the school-house of district number one was filled at an early hour, and judging by the number of candles brought by those who were here assembled, it was intended to throw some light upon the subject of temperance. The old-fashioned high desk, behind which sat Deacon Cragin, was adorned with a brass candlestick, which had formed part of his grandmother's wedding outfit. Quaint in its design, it attracted attention whenever seen, and this may have been one reason why it was used on this occasion. The deacon would be sure to have the eyes of the young people turned towards him.

When the house was quite full, he rose and asked Mr. Gibson to open the meeting with



prayer. After the prayer, George Ransom read a report of what was done at the parsonage on Saturday, with the constitution then adopted. He also explained the reason why a society had not been formally organized at the town-house. Mr. Gibson followed with some remarks, and then all present were invited to come forward and add their names to those already enrolled. Of course, those who had signed the pledge were ready to do this, while several others imitated their example.

During the time there was some confusion, caused by the efforts of Deacon Campbell to make his way through the crowd in the entry. No one expected to see him there. It was feared that he had come for the purpose of opposition, but this fear was soon dispelled when, by signing the constitution, he committed himself to the new movement. Mr. Gibson's heart gave a bound of joy.

There were speeches, and some singing, although cold water songs were not much



known among this people. It was a good meeting; a long meeting, too, it would be considered in these days, yet no one thought of its length.

Deacon Campbell felt called upon to make some explanation of his conduct. "I was opposed to any change in our way of livin," he said. "I didn't believe Mr. Safford's sermon—I don't mean that, exactly, and I'd best tell just as things are, now I've begun. I I didn't want to believe it. I thought I could manage my own eatin and drinkin without any help, and I felt as though our minister was meddlin with what didn't concern him. But taint no use talkin about that, you can guess near enough how I felt, and I just said to myself, I never'll give up to these new-fangled notions. I always had dranked liquor, and so had most everybody round me, and we'd got along well enough. I quoted Scriptur, but I quoted all on one side, and I didn't want to hear nothin about the other side. I aint goin to make a speech; I didn't



come prepared for that. I only want to tell you that there aint but precious little spirit in my house, and there wont be no more very soon."

Not a very eloquent address, but it had the merit of directness, and would have great influence. No one knew that the change in Deacon Campbell's feelings had been wrought by any peculiar experience. It was understood that Horace had not been well for several days, but no one outside the family suspected the cause of his illness. "I'm glad it happened just so," he said to his mother. "Father and I didn't understand each other very well, and if there hadn't something happened we might gone on getting farther apart all the time. He don't seem as he used to."

"I guess he don't," was the mother's reply. "We shall all be better for letting liquor alone—you and I, as well as he."

"Yes, mother. But father might talked to me forever about drinking, and I shouldn't cared, as long as he dranked himself."



"You'll care now, Horace?"

"Yes, mother, I shall. You needn't worry any more about my being a drunkard."

This conversation took place while Deacon Campbell was at the temperance meeting, and it was decided by mother and son that they would attend the next meeting.

"George is going to sign to-night," said Horace. "He told me so just before he went away. Wont folks be surprised when they know about father? Deacon Flanders wont know what to make of it."

"I hope Deacon Flanders will follow your father's example."

"He wont, mother. You needn't expect it. He says when he puts his foot down it stays there, and he likes to be on the contrary side anyway. He'll make trouble for Mr. Gibson yet."

"Then there's more reason why we should stand by the minister, and help him. I guess I'd better ask him and his wife over here next week, if you get well."



"I shall get well, mother. I feel pretty well now, and might gone out to-night without hurting me, if father'd thought so."

"He didn't think so, Horace. He wouldn't had you gone for any thing. I never see nothin take hold of his feelins as this has."

"Don't talk about it, mother," said the boy. "I'm glad it happened, but I can't bear to think of it."

George Campbell went from home with the intention of joining the temperance society, but most of the people had left the house before he entered.

"Here, George, we want your name on this paper," exclaimed Bashy Turner, who had commenced the work of canvassing.

"You can have it, better than not," was the reply; "I've been waiting on the doorstep long enough."

"Well, I'm glad you come; and now, Mrs. Cragin, I guess we'd better go home, if you're ready. Taint no use waitin for the deacon. There's got to be a good deal of talkin done



before he goes. He's got hold of Deacon Campbell, and they're both pretty good hands to hold on."

Mrs. Cragin, Bashy Turner, and several other women started off, leaving the men to finish the talk and the candles, the last of which was just exhausted.

Having reached home, Bashy and her hostess must needs comment upon the events of the evening. "Says I to myself," when Deacon Campbell came in and signed his name, "says I to myself, that's more'n I expected. If Deacon Campbell aint the set-test man in Hardhack, he's next to it, and the one that beats him is Deacon Flanders. I don't expect any thing from him; I can't, in reason, though I hope for the best," and the speaker snapped her shears in a way no child would have dared to imitate.

"We'll all hope for the best," replied Mrs. Cragin, in whose face there shone something of the light which had illumined it in her girlhood.



Presently the boys came in, and after Jim had explained the cause of their delay, much to the confusion of his eldest brother, they went up stairs. Mary, a girl of ten, who had been left in charge of the children younger than herself, hurried to bed, that she might be up early the next morning.

“Who’d believed, a fortnight ago, that old Hardhack would see such times as these!” exclaimed Bashy. “I want to get a chance to see Ezry Nichols’ wife. I’m afraid she’ll have a hard time with the old man, though she’ll stand her ground as well as anybody. I’ve wondered a good many times, when I’ve been there, if old folks need to look as bad as he does, and I’ve found out, now, to my satisfaction. It’s the liquor and tobacker makes them look so. There’s old Mrs. Jones, she’ll just match Grandsir Nichols. She snuffs and he chews, and they both smoke. Well, I’m glad I don’t take snuff, though folks say old maids commonly do.”

“I’m glad you don’t,” responded Mrs. Cra-



gin; "everybody knows that you're a clean, neat woman."

"I mean to be," was the reply. "My mother used to say that cleanliness was next to godliness, and most folks that has the last has the first, though 'taint always so. I never was handsome, but I mean to be wholesome. There, Mrs. Cragin, to change the subject, as Mrs. Holden says, I got things pretty much mixed up in my mind when I was in meetin, and I thought of somethin that'll make the deacon a good jacket."

"What is it, Bashy?"

"The long tails of his butternut-colored coat."

Mrs. Cragin laughed heartily at the very idea, for this coat had been made more than twenty years before.

"You needn't laugh, Mrs. Cragin," said Bashy, shaking her head wisely. "I've made jackets out of more unlikely lookin things than that coat was, the last time I see it. Mrs. Barrett could tell you; and though



there's enough of everything here, 'taint right to be wasteful."

"I know it, but Jim thought that coat ought to be saved for a scarecrow."

"Well, I'll see about it in the mornin. 'Twill take some piecin, but I know how to do that."

The coat was examined next morning, and in its presence the jacket vanished.

"There's some good pieces though," said Bashy. "Just what I wanted when I was to Mrs. Barrett's."

"You can have them for Mrs. Barrett."

"Then I'll take them, Mrs. Cragin, and she'll be thankful enough. They have a hard time to make buckle and strap meet at the end of the year. It will be easier now though, since he won't drink liquor."

"He never dranked a great deal, Bashy."

"He dranked enough to make a difference in the cost of livin, and enough to make him cross too sometimes."

"Men think liquor does them good."



"I know they say so; and I don't want to say they lie, though I know they do. I've been round enough to see that. Most of the men are cross as bears when they're in liquor, and their wives go runnin round to wait on the sots, scared most to death. I tell you, Bashy Turner wouldn't do that, and 'taint the way the Lord meant a woman to do."

Deacon Cragin, overhearing this remark, winced, but wisely held his peace until moved by a sudden impulse, he exclaimed:

"Bashy, I don't believe we could do any better than to get you to give us a temperance lecture."

"Deacon!" and she looked at him with flashing eyes, "I suppose you say that, because I talk so much about drinkin. But you just be knocked round by a drunkard as I was, and see your mother killed by inches, as I did, and see whether you'd talk!" Here the speaker's voice was choked with sobs.

"Bashy Turner, I don't blame you a bit," said Deacon Cragin, going towards her. "I



spoke in earnest, because I really think you could talk more to the purpose than any of us men. I hope you don't think I meant different from what I said."

"I did think so," was the reply. "I know I talk a good deal about drinkin, and folks don't like it."

"Talk on, Bashy, I'm glad for every word you say about it. You've had a chance to see what's going on in Hardhack."

"I guess I have, deacon. I could tell some stories that would open folks' eyes. It's time somethin was done, and Mr. Gibson knew it a good while ago. There's women and children in this town that don't have a real good meal of victuals once a week, and all because of liquor."

"I don't doubt it, Bashy. It's a terrible state of things, though I never thought any thing about it till lately. We've got to have a hard pull here. There's some in the church that never'll come into the new movement. I am goin to do all I can to help Mr. Gibson, but



he's got a hard row to hoe. Folks didn't look at him last Sunday as they always have before."

"Hardhack aint the only place in the world," was responded. "He can find places enough to go to, if our folks don't do their duty. And there's Mrs. Gibson, as good a woman as you can find anywhere. She'll help her husband. She knows how, and he thinks every thing of her. There aint no orderin round in that house. I've been there enough to know that, though Mrs. Gibson manages every thing herself."

"I've a high opinion of Mrs. Gibson," said Deacon Cragin. "I hope there wont be a division in the church, but I must say it looks like it."

"Well, Deacon, don't say a word about it out round. We must act as though we expected everybody to do right, and then perhaps they'll be ashamed not to."



## CHAPTER VII.

## A VISITATION.



SHAMED! Hardhack people were never ashamed to oppose an innovation. Indeed, they rather gloried in so doing, and now that their liberties were threatened, they surely would not prove recreant. Yet Deacon Campbell's defection was a sore trial to the party with which at first he had identified himself. Before noon on Thursday, it was known throughout the town that he signed the "constitootion" of the temperance society and made a speech in its favor.

"I never knew Brother Campbell to be guilty of double dealin before," said Deacon Porter, who had been so much agitated by the news that he left his work and rode over to see Deacon Flanders. "He said we might depend on him to do his duty, and I did depend on



him. But we've been deceived. He aint the man I thought he was."

"No, he aint, deacon," was the reply. "What do you think of callin him to account for what he said Sunday? A man that professes what he does, ought to keep his word. I thought 'twas best to put off our meetin till he wasn't busy, but he had time to go to the temperance meetin."

"Can't you ride over to see him this mornin, Deacon Flanders? We don't ought to neglect the spiritooal interests of the town."

"I know that, but I've a good many chores to do this forenoon, and I promised Mrs. Flanders I'd go over to her mother's with her this afternoon."

"But we're bound to look after the spiritooal interests of them over whom we're set," urged Deacon Flanders; and this consideration was so enforced by the spirit poured from a well filled decanter, that chores and promises were forgotten.

"Mother, there's Deacon Flanders and Dea-



con Porter coming through the gull," said Horace Campbell, who was sitting by a window which commanded a view of the road for a quarter of a mile. "They're coming to take up a labor with father."

"I shouldn't think a mite strange," replied Mrs. Campbell. "Your father won't want to stop to talk this mornin, he's got so much to do."

"I know it, mother, and he ought to let me help him. He don't allow me to work or read, and sitting round here is dull business. I'm quite well enough now to do something."

"Your father knows best about that, Horace, and you needn't be afraid to trust him."

"But I know just how much has got to be done, and I wouldn't miss going to school this winter for a farm."

"You won't miss it, Horace. You'll go every day, for all the work, if you want to."

"Want to, mother! If I could only have



a chance to study, I'd try to be somebody. I used to think I would, at any rate."

Deacon Campbell, who was at work near the road, met his visitors cordially. "Fine day," he said, looking up to the sun. "I thought we wasn't likely to have much such weather, so I've been fixing up my sheep pens. It's good economy to give cattle and sheep warm quarters."

"That's true," replied Deacon Flanders, who had employed himself the last ten minutes in arranging a speech of reproof for his recreant brother. "You told us Sunday you was busy."

"Yes, it's a busy season for me, and Horace haint been very well this week, so I need to do work enough for two."

"'Taint no use beatin round the bush now," said Deacon Porter, impatient to come to the business in hand. "We calkerlated to have a meetin Saturday, and expected you'd come."

"What kind of a meetin?" asked Deacon Campbell.



"A meetin to see what's best to do about this new movement."

"There was such a meetin last night. I didn't see neither of you there."

"That was a meetin of the temperance society," remarked Deacon Flanders, with a great effort to be dignified.

"Yes, and a good meetin 'twas too. Just drive along up to the house, and we'll talk it over. I want you to see this matter just as 'tis."

"We see it plain enough now," was the reply. "But we thought 'twas our dooty to come and talk a little with you, and if you aint too busy, we'll go up to the house a spell."

Horace informed his mother of their approach, and she hastened to put her kitchen in order, but her husband thought it was best to have a fire in the front room.

"We've got some business to talk over, and might be in your way, while you're getting dinner," he said. "Guess we'll have



dinner in good season;" which remark was understood.

There was the usual cupboard by the chimney in the front room, and through the glass door might be seen Mrs. Campbell's "best set of dishes," but no decanter was there. The guests, observing this, concluded that they should have a dry time. Yet they had "a dooty" to perform, and Deacon Porter expressed his great sorrow at losing the influence of the brother in whom they had placed so much confidence. "I don't see how you can see your way clear," he remarked.

"I see it by the new light," was the answer. "I see that I've been doin wrong all these years, and I'm now tryin to do better."

"But, Deacon Campbell, you don't call it wrong to take a little liquor once in a while, do you?"

"I do, now. It's either right or wrong, there aint no middle ground. Look round on



the drunkards in town, and see what drinkin leads to."

"There aint many drunkards in town," said Deacon Flanders.

"What do you mean by a drunkard?" said his host.

"A man that gets drunk, of course."

"How drunk?"

"Well,"—there was some hesitation—"so drunk he don't know what he's about."

"Dead drunk, you mean?"

"Why no, not exactly. When he's the worse for liquor."

"Do you mean when he behaves worse than he would if he hadn't been drinking liquor, he's drunk?"

"Seems to me you ask a good many questions," remarked Deacon Porter.

"Yes, but you know we're trying to get at the truth. A good deal depends upon what we mean by drunk," and the last question was repeated.

"Why, yes; I suppose a man's some drunk



then. But we don't no how belong to that class, deacon. We don't believe in gettin drunk."

"I'm afraid I did belong to that class."

"Why, Brother Campbell, don't slander yourself so. 'Taint likely a deacon of our church would get drunk."

"But I've behaved worse a good many times, than I should if I'd let liquor alone. I've scolded my children, and found fault with my wife when I'd no business to. I've been domineerin and snappish when I ought to have been pleasant, and I've spent money for liquor when it ought to have gone into the treasury of the Lord."

There was an awkward silence. Deacon Flanders flourished his bandanna and looked annoyed, while Deacon Porter seemed to be in a brown study. Such a confession as that to which they had listened was virtually an accusation, and they were ill at ease.

"You talk strangely, Deacon Campbell. You've always been an exemplary man."



"I used to think I was, but I've been led to see my own wickedness."

"We heard you signed the constitootion of the temperance society last night."

"I did, and am enlisted heart and hand in the cause. We're goin to have a meetin at the school-house once a fortnight, and I hope you'll come in."

"We shan't," answered Deacon Flanders. "We aint goin to sign away our liberties and have folks tell us what we can't drink. I'm astonished that you're willin to put yourself under such bonds."

"What kind of bonds?"

"Well, promises—if that suits you any better. You promised not to drink any intoxicating liquor, didn't you?"

"Yes, I did, and set my name to it. I wont drink, nor give it to anybody else. My family shan't drink, if I can help it, and I'll do my best to make my boys temperance men. If they turn out like Ben Welcome, it shan't be my fault."



"Brother Welcome tried to bring his boy up right," said Deacon Porter.

"He made the same mistake the rest of us have been making," was the reply; "he brought him up to drink liquor."

"Well, what if he did?" asked Deacon Flanders, sharply. "The boy ought to know enough not to drink too much."

"You remember what Mr. Safford said about that, don't you?"

"No, I didn't pay much attention to that sermon."

"It's my opinion you ought to. He said some folks couldn't drink moderately; after they got a taste for liquor they couldn't let it alone."

"I don't believe that, if Mr. Safford did say it. Because a man drinks once in a while, it's no sign he can't leave off when he's a mind to. I could leave off any day, if I wanted to."

"You could; but you'd find it pretty hard work if you're any like me," said Deacon



Campbell; "you'd find out that you dranked liquor because you wanted it."

"I drink it because I need it," responded Deacon Porter; "I couldn't get along, and do my work without it. If it wasn't for that, I could give it up any day."

"And not have any hankerin for it?"

"Well, I suppose I should miss it, just as we do any thing we get used to."

"I suppose you would, deacon; at any rate, I do. It's hard work for me to deny the flesh and the devil. Wont you both try this new kind of temperance a month? Look round among the folks you know, and see if 'taint the best thing for us all. A good many of our young men bid fair to be drunkards, unless they take a new turn. Ben Welcome aint the only one."

"Have your boys joined the society?"

"George has joined, and Horace will the next meeting. He needs to, and now I've set him the example, he'll be ready to. I haint dranked a drop of liquor since I was



at your house, Saturday. I took too much then. I've thought a good deal of what Mrs. Holden said, and accordin to my mind, that church member that went to her three times for liquor, comes pretty nigh bein a drunkard."

"Have you any idea who 'twas?" asked Deacon Flanders. "I can't think of anybody that would be likely to do so, though I suppose Mrs. Holden told the truth."

I have given enough of this conversation to show that the self-appointed committee of remonstrance were by no means so severe as they had intended. Deacon Campbell was not accused of double-dealing, although it is possible that he might have been but for the announcement of dinner.

"I'd no idee 'twas so late;" said both visitors. "We've hendered you too long."

"O, no," was the reply. "I shall work all the faster this afternoon, and you'll go home feelin better for some warm dinner. I guess wife has got somethin that will relish."



The gentlemen could not well refuse the cordial invitation to dinner, and whatever discomfiture they may have felt, it certainly did not affect their appetite.

"I'm glad they're gone," exclaimed Horace. "I wonder if they feel any better satisfied."

"I guess not," replied Fanny. "I heard one of them say, 'We're sorry you act against us, deacon;' and father said, 'The temperance folks can count on me to the end of the chapter.'"

"Good for father. I used to know he drank too much. I guess we shan't have any more trouble."

At Deacon Cragin's they were on the lookout to see the two deacons going towards home, and when Jim cried, "They're coming," Bashy Turner stationed herself where she could see their faces as they passed.

"They're beat," she said. "Deacon Flanders' head's on one side, and Deacon Porter sets up straight as a ramrod. They didn't get no comfort at Deacon Campbell's. But,



O dear! they'll make trouble for Mr. Gibson."

So said every one; some with a smile of satisfaction, and some with a sigh of regret. Some pitied and some blamed; while a few brave souls, throwing off the bondage of a sinful and foolish custom, were ready to sustain their pastor in the face of all opposition. Perhaps, in all Hardhack, there was not an individual but had heard the subject of temperance discussed, since Mr. Safford had so eloquently urged the people to do themselves no harm. From the pretentious dwelling of Mr. Welcome, who was considered the richest man in town, to the log house which furnished a home to Aunt Betty Glines and her fatherless boy, this had been the topic of conversation.

Mr. Welcome, now approaching old age, mourned the recklessness and dissipation of the Benjamin of his flock. Mrs. Glines looked back to a married life, the record of which was all blotted with tears. A



drunken husband, children enfeebled by her own hardships, six short graves in the old burial ground, and at length a death-given release from him who had cursed her life.

One boy remained to her, and him she called Samuel, trusting that the Lord would hear her prayers in his behalf. Living upon the coarsest fare, and careful to obey his mother in all things, he had reached the age of ten years, a stout, sturdy, honest little fellow. It was generally thought among the farmers that Betty was very foolish to slave herself as she did, when Sam might be bound out to earn his own living. But she, knowing by experience the lot of a bound child, determined to keep him with her at all costs. She would not even allow him to work for the farmers, lest persuasion and example might counteract the influence of her teachings, and he learn the use of intoxicating drink.

On the small patch of ground which she



owned, with the house, they raised potatoes, and often these, roasted in the ashes, and eaten with salt, were their only supper. Yet she did not complain. She would have starved rather than give the care of him to another, and he was satisfied to trust her; although he looked forward to the time when he should be able to work and have a home very unlike the rough log house.

“You shan’t spin nor weave then,” he would say. “We’ll burn up the wheel and the loom.”

“No, Samuel, we’ll keep them always. They’ve been good friends, and the day never’ll come when we can afford to burn them.”

This woman spun, wove, or knit, with untiring industry, but only to aid the sick could she be persuaded to leave home for a single night. In summer she dwelt amid Nature’s choicest beauties, but in winter, when the snow lay deep around, she seemed



almost shut out from the world. Her nearest neighbor was a quarter of a mile distant, and never did the morning dawn, but he looked to see if there was a smoke from Aunt Betty's chimney.

As her work was always well done, she was sure of a constant supply, and often a light gleamed through the small windows of her house long after the usual hour for retiring. Charity she would not accept. For every thing, new or old, she rendered a fair equivalent. Living in so retired and humble a way, she had few especial friends. People came and went, speaking kindly, sometimes pityingly; but of all these, Bashy Turner was her only confidant. From this friend she heard the principal points of Mr. Safford's sermon, and learned of the excitement it had produced.

"I wish I'd gone," said Mrs. Glines. "I would, if I'd known what 'twas goin to be, and spun nights to make up, though every body's in a hurry. I never had so many



rolls in the house this time of year. "Wool's low, and folks think it's a good time to have cloth and blankets made up. I'm most tired workin so stiddy, and I'm afraid I shant git Samuel's clothes made after all."

"You needn't worry a mite about that," responded Bashy. "You only git the cloth ready for the shears, and I'll see it's well made up."

"And I'll see you're paid some way."

"Don't say a word about payin, Mrs. Glines. I calkerlate to give away a week's work in the course of a year, and this year I'm goin to give it to you. 'Taint nobody's business but yours and mine, and if you can't be satisfied no other way, you can do some spinnin for me some time. I come to let you know what's goin on. We're all engaged, and I knew you'd want to hear."

"Thank you, kindly, Bashy. I know you are busy."

"Busy as I can be. But says I to Mrs.



Cragin, I must see Aunt Betty, and I'll make up the time. There's goin to be a meetin at the school-house Wednesday night, and I wish you'd come."





## CHAPTER VIII.

## THE LEAVEN WORKING.



RS. GLINES was not able to attend the temperance meeting, but Samuel was present, and crowding into the smallest possible space, heard and saw all that transpired. "O mother! I wish you'd been there, and heard them talk," he exclaimed on his return.

"What did they say?" asked the poor woman.

"I can't tell all, but I know what Deacon Cragin said," replied her son; and with ready words he repeated much of what he had heard. "I wanted to sign the paper with the rest, and I had a good mind to ask the minister if I couldn't print my name. Wont you ask him next time he comes here?"

"I'll see about it," was Mrs. Glines' answer to this question. "It's time now to go to bed,



so you can get up early in the morning. I want you to go to the village and get some red-wood."

"Then I'll go to bed any time, but I don't believe I shall sleep a wink, I've got too much to think of. I want to learn to write my name, and I could, if I had some paper and something to look at. I've got some quills, and I could use some of your black dye for ink. Don't you believe Mr. Gibson would write my name, so I could look at it."

"Perhaps so, but he's got a good deal to do, and little boys like you hadn't ought to trouble the minister."

"But he always speaks to me, mother, just as though he wanted to; and he told me last summer that I'd be a good scholar if I kept on."

"I hope you'll be a good man, that the Lord will bless. Take your Testament and read."

So Samuel read a few verses, the mother prayed, and the boy lay down upon his hard bed. Long after this the wheel hummed,



while the spinner paced to and fro, but she watched alone. The sleep of childhood is sweet, and with the morning comes a freshness and buoyancy which only such repose can give.

Mrs. Glines did not wake until a fire crackled on the old stone hearth, and kettles swung from the crane. Through the half-open door she watched Samuel—as she always called her son, although every one else shortened his name—sweep, draw out the table, and then look round in some perplexity.

“I’ll be there in a minute,” she said, and was answered by a shout which was in itself inspiring. “We’ll have a good breakfast this morning.” Pork, potatoes, and corn bread, with a cup of weak tea for the mother, furnished a luxurious repast.

“Now I could walk forty miles, just as well as not,” exclaimed Sam, when his appetite was satisfied. “I wish—” but here he was interrupted by the admonition, “Don’t wish for what the Lord don’t see fit to give you ; ’taint



right. We ought to be contented with our lot:" and yet this woman's whole life had been a struggle to rise above her surroundings.

Sam started for the village, fully impressed with the importance of his business.

"Don't get into bad company, my boy."

"No, mother;" and she heard his cheery whistle, long after he was out of sight.

In his walk he encountered Jim Cragin, who asked why he didn't put his name down on the paper with the rest.

"Because I can't write my name; if I could, I should," he answered, frankly.

"Why don't you learn?"

"I'm goin to, this winter; and I'd learn right off, if anybody would make a copy for me, and I had a piece of paper. I had most a good mind to ask Mr. Gibson."

"Well, ask him; he'll be glad to have you."

"But he's a minister."

"What if he is? He's a man, just the same, and I aint a bit afraid of him. Bashy says he likes boys and girls, and she knows."



Sam trudged on, revolving this advice in his mind, and hoping he should meet the minister. He walked by the parsonage very slowly, looking at every window; then turning, walked back again, and was passing for the third time, when Mrs. Gibson, who had observed his movements, appeared at the door.

“Good morning, Sam,” she said, pleasantly. “Wont you come in and rest awhile? You must be tired, if you’ve walked all the way from home.”

He was very glad to accept this invitation, and soon he told the kind lady of his great desire to learn to write his name.

“I can help you in that,” she replied, and presently Sam Glines found himself the possessor of a neatly made blank book, upon the top of each page of which was his name, written in clear, bold letters.

“Thank you, ma’am,” he said, while his face glowed, and his eyes sparkled. “I’ll try and pay you, some time,” he added, betraying



the independent spirit his mother had so carefully fostered.

That afternoon, when the boy was making his first experiment in writing, Mr. Gibson rode up to the door of his mother's poor house. She was very much confused at such an arrival, for although she was never omitted in the yearly round, she saw little of her pastor except in the pulpit. And it is a significant fact, that the only liquor she had in the house, after her husband's death, had been reserved for the minister. The last drop was given to Mr. Gibson, when he called six months before, and now she could offer him but a cup of tea without cream. In her simplicity and confusion she told him this.

"I only want a drink of water from your spring," he answered, smiling; and Sam went out for this.

While he was gone, Mr. Gibson improved the opportunity to ask Mrs. Glines what she proposed to do for him as he grew older.

"I can't do much more," she replied.



"I can't earn enough for us both much longer."

"Boys of his age, about here, are expected to earn their own living," remarked the visitor.

"I know it, and there's been places offered to my boy, but I couldn't let him go—I wouldn't have him learn to be a drunkard; I'd rather he'd die."

"And that is why you have kept him at home?"

"Yes, sir."

Not a place in all Hardhack where this poor woman dared to trust her boy! Were the old days better than are the new? How people would have sneered at Betty Glines' scruples! Not so, her pastor. She had been wiser than he, in recognizing the power of example; and I doubt if, of all who urged him to labor for the cause of temperance, any one had greater influence than this same poor woman.

"I can't help you, except with my prayers," she said. "But you'll have them, and the Lord is on your side."



Sam came back from the spring, and having drank of the clear, cold water, Mr. Gibson asked how he succeeded in trying to write.

"Not very well," was the reply. "I can't make a pen."

"I thought you'd have trouble. Bring me your quills, and I'll make some pens." The pens were made, and some ink produced. "I brought this for you, and now let me show you how to hold your pen."

Mrs. Glines looked on, grateful and happy. Proud too, was she, when assured that her boy would soon be able to write his own name and join the temperance society.

"Go to school this winter and next spring. I will see what I can do for you. I am sure you would like to help your mother."

"Yes, sir, I should. I want to take care of her, so she wont have to work a bit. I'm goin to study just as hard as I can."

"That's right. You'll be sure to learn, if you do."

"Aint he good!" exclaimed Sam, so loudly



that he could not fail to be heard by the clergyman, to whom these three words were a song of thanksgiving.

He called at Deacon Cragin's, and there received a most cordial welcome. Bashy was particularly glad to see him, and with her usual good sense, made some practical suggestions for carrying on the temperance campaign.

"You'd stir up a good deal of opposition," said the deacon.

"I know it, but there'll be opposition any way; 'taint no use makin a fuss for nothin, and folks respect them that aint afraid. There's been drinkin enough in our church. I've heard old drunkards talk about it, and I bless the Lord that I've lived to see this day."

Having thus expressed her feelings, Bashy turned to her work and said no more; although her animated face showed that she was no indifferent listener to the conversation that followed.

Meanwhile the anti-temperance party were



not idle. Deacon Flanders and Deacon Porter visited from house to house, among those who were supposed to be in sympathy with them. There was a great deal of boasting, loud talking of liberty, and predictions of trouble. "'Taint accordin to Scriptur," said many an old reader of the Bible, with whom St. Paul's injunction to Timothy far outweighed the teachings of the Old Testament. They knew of no wine save that which intoxicates, and believed that our Saviour had sanctioned its use. Bashy said, "They held forth on Scriptur, while anybody with half an eye could see that *natur* was at the bottom."

It is doubtful if ever before, so much liquor was drank with such sanctimonious faces. If those who indulged did not give thanks, they certainly smacked their lips with becoming earnestness. Old men, trembling on the brink of the grave, with young men in the strength and glory of their lives, were ready to resist the innovation. And yet the visitors were not altogether satisfied. Some



people were thinking seriously as they struggled against the conviction that there was need of reform.

"Well, brother, I'll see you again about this," remarked Deacon Porter, while his companion was, with great difficulty, getting out of the wagon. "We've had a hard day's work, and I feel it; but I trust it's been for the spiritooal good of some."

Poor deluded man! Yet at this particular time he was excusable, for his brain was in a sad state of confusion. An hour after he parted with Deacon Flanders, Ezra Nichols saw his horse and wagon standing under the wide-spreading branches of an old elm, by the road-side.

"Halloo! What's the matter?" There was no response, and Mr. Nichols sprang from his horse. Going nearer, he exclaimed, "Who is here? What does this mean?" and presently he saw the figure of a man half reclining upon the broad seat. "Anybody hurt?" Now he touched the man, and by



his voice, recognized Deacon Porter. "You hurt, deacon?"

"Guess not. Seems to me though, there's somethin the matter with my head," stammered the benighted man. "I was goin home."

"You won't get there very soon, at this rate. You'd better take the reins and drive on. Let me turn your horse into the road," he said, suiting the action to the word. "Want any more help?"

"No; I'm much obliged to you though, for what you've done. I don't know nothin what made the old mare stop."

Ezra Nichols understood the matter, and if Deacon Porter had taken the trouble to look behind him, he would have seen that he was followed, until he reached his own door. A poor boy, living with him, learned a lesson that night, while at least one member of Deacon Flanders' family questioned the propriety of so much drinking.

There were no more "spiritooal" visita-



tions that week. It was observed when the deacons met the next Sabbath morning that their greetings were less fraternal, while at noon there was no private consultation between them.

The people, generally, gathered in groups to talk temperance; its friends sanguine, its enemies bitter.

"I expected to hear somethin about it in the sermon," said one.

"Why should you?" asked another. "Mr. Gibson don't harp on one string all the time. He aint a man of one idea. We've had an excellent sermon, and I hope we shall remember it. I'm sorry there were so few to hear it."

"Well, I suppose you know the reason. Folks want to hear the gospel preached, not man's inventions."

"And they hear the gospel, when Mr. Gibson preaches."

This among the men, while the women were not silent. Bashy Turner went from



one pew to another, speaking her mind and praising the minister, everywhere welcomed as reliable authority in disputed questions.

"I'm glad you've come round," said old Mrs. Peters; "I want to ask you some questions;" and the cracked voice in which this was said grew shrill with excitement. "What started up Deacon Campbell, arter what he said? It beats me, and I thought you'd know."

"I don't know nothin about it, Mrs. Peters. If there's a reason, he haint told. I was to the meetin when he signed."

"You was! I s'posed so, and I hearn tell that the school-house was full."

"'Twas full as folks could be comfortable, and I wish you'd been there."

"I dunno, I dunno, Bashy. I've made it a subject of prayer; but I don't see my way clear yit. I s'pose you do."

"Clear's a bell, Mrs. Peters, and so'd other folks if they'd be willin to hear reason."

"I'm willin," said the old woman, with



tears in her eyes. "If I've been wrong, I want to be forgiven 'fore I die, and 'twont be long."

"Well, Mrs. Peters, if you've took to prayin over it, most likely you'll come out right, though somebody might help you along. I wish you'd come to one of our temperance meetins."

"I'm too old for that, Bashy; but if you'd come and tell me what they say, I'd take it kindly. You've got a good memory."

"I guess I have—too good sometimes; and if there's a day to spare any time along, I'll make you a visit. You haint heard no bad news lately, I hope;" and when this remark was answered by an ominous shake of the head, Bashy said, decidedly, "I'll come."

No drunkards in the olden time, before temperance reforms had agitated the land? Three hundred thousand! Hardhack people said this was impossible, and yet their town furnished its full proportion of this number. The first pauper in Hardhack was beggared




by rum. The first crime within its borders was committed under the influence of intoxicating drink; and the first grave opened, was for one whose life had been shortened by intemperance.





## CHAPTER IX.

## AN INVESTIGATION DEMANDED.

“OING to the temperance meeting?”

This question was repeated so often that Jim Cragin shouted it at his work, declaring that the oxen understood its meaning, and rejoiced in anticipation of better days. “Star and Bright know there’s something in the wind. They’ve forgot all about a goad-stick, same as I’ve forgot about a scolding.”

The temperance meeting was to be on Wednesday evening, and the corn-husking at Deacon Campbell’s on Thursday evening. Notice of the former was given from the pulpit, while news of the latter was circulated generally, and it was expected there would be a full attendance on both occasions.

On Wednesday evening the officers of the



new society were early in their places. Prayer was offered, and a report of the previous meeting read. Speeches were called for. Deacon Cragin said they wanted to hear from everybody, and know just how they stood. "This is sort of a conference. We've got work before us, and the more resolute we take hold, the better. Our opposers say we're uprootin the foundations of society, and if that's the case we want to know it. If society rests upon rum casks, we want to know that, too, and we'll pull out the casks and let society settle."

As the deacon paused, a red-faced farmer said he would like to ask a question, if it was in order.

"It is in order," was the reply. "We shall be glad to hear questions from any one."

"Well, then, what's stirred up this fuss? I ain't much of a hand to go to meetin, and didn't hear Mr. Safford's sermon, so I don't know exactly how it come about. If liquor does so much hurt, why didn't our fathers and grandfathers find it out? I aint a professor,



and don't read the Bible as much as some of the rest of you, but seems to me you're gettin a good ways ahead of that."

"I think you'll find us nearer the Bible than we've ever been before, Mr. Runnels," answered Deacon Cragin. "But our minister here, can explain it all to you."

Mr. Gibson rose, glad of an opportunity to speak in a familiar way upon the very points which had been mentioned. He reviewed the labors of a few earnest men, whose attention had been aroused by the alarming prevalence of intemperance, described the manner in which statistics had been gathered, and adverted to the influence which had been used to induce clergymen to preach against this great evil.

"It is more than two years since I received the first letter, urging me to this duty, yet I have kept silence. I knew how difficult it would be to convince this people that they had been wrong, and I shrunk from the opposition I was sure I should meet. I love my



people, and it grieves me when they look at me coldly; but I must obey God, rather than man."

Having thus secured the sympathy of all present, it was easy for the speaker to proceed with a statement of facts. The number of drunkards, which had at first seemed impossible, was made to appear credible. The enormous consumption of alcoholic liquor, which equalled that of six gallons a year for every man, woman, and child in the country, was proved to be no groundless assertion. "If we could collect facts here, if we could know how many deaths have been caused by intemperance, and how many lives have been made wretched, I think we should find our town no better than others."

At the close of Mr. Gibson's remarks, all united in singing the grand old tune of Coronation, a perfectly orthodox way of giving utterance to their excited feelings.

Mr. Runnels expressed his thanks, and promised to think over the matter, adding,



"I don't like to be called a drunkard; but I'm afraid if you're goin to canvass the town you'll count me on that side. My father brought me up to drink liquor, and if I'd had any boys, I suppose I should done the same, and thought 'twas all right. I move that, somehow, you get an estimate of the drunkards here for the last twenty-five years. There is enough can remember as long ago as that, and there can't nobody find any fault with tellin the truth. I believe in fair play both sides, and if I'm beat, I'll own it, and give five dollars to the minister next donation."

"Good for you, Mr. Runnels!" exclaimed a man at his side. "I second that motion; and I'll give another five dollars to the minister if the temperance folks get the best of it."

Such peals of laughter followed, that Deacon Cragin rapped for order, and asked if the motion thus made should be put to vote. It was moved and seconded by the members of the society that this should be done, and, accordingly, a vote was taken. A committee



was then appointed to make the necessary investigations; this committee consisting of George Ransom, Ezra Nichols, and Mr. Whitney.

"I would like to inquire what is expected of us," remarked the last named gentleman. "Mr. Runnels and Mr. Smith say they'll each give five dollars to the minister if they're fairly beat. I should like to know what they mean by fairly beat."

"Well, I declare, Mr. Whitney, I can't exactly tell, myself," said Mr. Runnels. "I suppose I mean if things are bad as the minister says—if the town's been hurt by the use of liquor."

"And who is going to decide?"

"I'll decide myself, and you needn't expect I'll be one-sided about it neither. I'll call in my wife if there's any danger, and she's clear temperance. That's what made me come here to-night."

"Then, as I understand it, if we can prove that the people of Hardhack have been



injured by the use of intoxicating liquor; if our taxes have been larger, and our schools shorter, because so much money has been spent for rum, you'll acknowledge yourselves beat."

"Yes, we will," replied both Mr. Runnels and Mr. Smith; although Bashy Turner thought they were getting "sick of their bargain."

"When shall we make a report?" asked Ezra Nichols.

"One month from to-night, if that'll give you time enough," replied Deacon Cragin.

"Every person in town should hear it," remarked Mr. Gibson. "This school-house is too small for us already. The boys will object to sitting on the door steps when it is much cooler, and we must certainly find room for the boys at these meetings."

"There aint any thing to hinder our havin the town-house, if we need it," responded Deacon Campbell, who was present with most of his family. "We can decide about it before our next meetin."



Several members were added to the society this evening. Mrs. Campbell, with three of her children; some young men from a remote part of the town; and last and least, Sam Glines. He had persevered until he could write his name so well that his mother could read it; and never was a prouder boy than he, when he lay down the pen after accomplishing this object, so dear to his heart.

"He aint old enough to know what he's about," sneered one. But he learned his mistake when Samuel repeated the temperance pledge, adding, "I know exactly what that means."

Of course he did. He knew that he was a drunkard's child, although he had never seen his brutalized father. He knew, when the pitch knot blazed in the chimney corner late at night, or his mother sat at the old loom at unseasonable hours, that the poverty which compelled her thus to labor was the result of intemperance.

"Better let Sam alone," suggested Jerry



Cragin. "He knows what he's about, and he's going to be a smart man, if he lives."

"Hope he will," was the reply. "'Twould be strange though, if Aunt Betty's boy should turn out any thing wonderful."

In another part of the school-room, a man who only came to see what the rest were doing, said to those about him: "I guess that committee'll stop before they git a great ways. Folks don't want anybody round, asking all kinds of questions, when they haint any business to."

"Folks can read the town records if they want to," replied Bashy Turner. "There aint no law against that."

"Nobody said there was. But they can't find out all they want by the town records."

"There's plenty of folks willin to tell the rest. If I could write as well as the minister, I could make out enough report myself, to earn ten dollars for him. 'Twouldn't be much work to do that. Hardhack aint no better'n other towns."



At this moment Mrs. Holden interrupted this woman's talk, which, as the meeting had been formally closed, was considered in order.

"The leaven seems to be working," remarked the storekeeper's wife.

"Yes, Mrs. Holden, and the mustard seed has sprouted," was Bashy's reply. "We've had a good meetin."

"Yes, I think we can all say that. Mrs. Campbell, your husband seems to have changed his mind since we met at Deacon Flanders'."

"We've both changed our minds, Mrs. Holden. You never 'll know how much good you done that afternoon."

"I'm glad if I done any. I've wished a good many times something had happened to keep me at home. I know you all thought different from what I did, but I couldn't help speaking my mind. I told Mr. Holden about it, and he said he guessed I hadn't done much hurt, so I begun to feel better about it."

"I'm glad for every word you said," replied



Mrs. Campbell. "There was a providence in your goin there that afternoon, and Mrs. Flanders thinks pretty nigh as I do, only she can't come out on account of the deacon. He's dreadful set, in his way, and there can't nobody turn him."

Directly, there was a general movement among the men gathered around the desk, as Deacon Campbell spoke of going home. A few words were exchanged in regard to the anticipated husking, and an assurance given that there would be no lack of help, when they separated.

The next day all was hurry and bustle in Mrs. Campbell's kitchen, the good woman being resolved that no one should find fault with her supper. Bashy Turner was there, and for this day laid aside thimble, needle and thread, that she might assist in cooking. Long before sunrise there had been a roaring fire in the brick oven, which was early filled with pies of the usual variety. As the morning advanced, pans were heaped with the



famous spiced doughnuts, indispensable to all merry-makings.

“Well, Mrs. Campbell, if they eat all them cakes they’ll be smart,” exclaimed Bashy, contemplating them with a smile. “But I expect there’ll be some dreadful hungry men here; dry, too, as a codfish. Old Harris ’ll begin to smack his lips before he’s husked half an hour; and I shouldn’t wonder if it took a gallon of cider to wash down his supper.”

“Likely as not, but we wont begrudge him the cider nor the supper, as long as he can’t get any liquor.”

“I hope there wont be none brought, Mrs. Campbell.”

“Why, you don’t expect there will be, do you?” was the reply. “What made you think of it?”

“I don’t know, unless it’s because I’ve heard so much about the depravity of mankind. The deacon wont be to blame for it though, and there’ll be enough temperance



folks to know it, so we needn't worry. How many do you expect?"

"I don't know nothing about that. I mean to have supper enough for as many as come."

"I guess there's no danger about that," replied Bashy. "It's time them pies come out of the oven."

In the midst of all this talk and work Fanny Campbell, a pretty girl, fourteen years of age, flitted about the old kitchen, caring for the younger children, and lending a helping hand wherever one was needed. She laughed more than she talked, content to listen.

Pork and beans, with corn bread, were to furnish the substantial part of the supper; and when the last loaf was in its place, and the oven lid securely fastened, Mrs. Campbell said to her efficient aid, "Now do sit down and take breath."

"Law, sake! I don't need to stop for that," was the reply. "I've been breathin all the



time. The supper's well under weigh, and I wish Betty Glines and her boy were comin to help eat it."

"I wish so, too, Bashy. I am afraid they go short sometimes."

"Not exactly that, Mrs. Campbell. They have enough of somethin, but they don't git many pies and cakes. They might come to the husking, and have supper here, and you not miss it."

"Of course they might, and what's to hinder their havin some, if they aint here? You might put up a basket full, and get Jim Cragin to take it along."

"I will, if you say so. Mrs. Glines is proud, but you can send word, that as long as she and Sam were invited, you got supper for them."

"That's just the thing," added Fanny. "I'll pack the basket."

The deacon came in, and hearing this plan for giving Aunt Betty a treat, proposed that enough be sent to "amount to somethin."



"She'll come to hear our temperance report, and we ought to helped her before."

"She's too proud to accept charity," now said Bashy Turner. "She's willin to work, but there's been some pretty dark times in that old log house. I wanted her to come down and help your wife to-day. 'Twould been a change for her; and I want to get through here soon as I can, to make some clothes for Sam. He needs them before school begins."





## CHAPTER X.

## A COLD WATER HUSKING.



PEOPLE wondered how it would seem to go to a cold water husking, and many predicted that it would be a dry concern. Always before, there had been bowls of egg-nog, mugs of flip, glasses of rum diluted and sugared, while for those who preferred it there was an abundant supply of the raw material. But none of all this now. Instead, there would be cider. In the early days of the temperance reform cider was not included in the pledge, and this was expected to form an important part of the evening's entertainment. If any one complained of cold, half a dozen red peppers would give to the orthodox beverage, already heated by a hissing loggerhead, sufficient "bite" to satisfy most people.



“They shant complain that it aint warmin, if you’ll let me fix it,” said Bashy. “I should like to fix a dose for Harris.”

The first arrivals were Jim Cragin, Sam Glines, and some other boys, who came early, “to see all that was goin on,” as Jim told Bashy.

“How did Sam’s mother happen to let him come?” she asked.

“O, I wanted him to come, so I went up to see her,” was the reply. “You know he most always stays to home; but after I told Aunt Betty what father said, she let him come. He can husk, and I knew he’d like the fun.”

“Of course he will, and I’m glad he’s come. Mrs. Campbell’s got somethin ready for him to carry to his mother, so she’ll get her share of the supper.”

The boys husked the first basket of corn alone, in the waning daylight; but they were soon joined by a large company of men. Contrary to all expectation, some old toppers



were present. If they could not both eat and drink at their host's expense, they proposed to make sure of the eating; but before the work was half done, Jim Cragin, whose senses were acute as those of an Indian, assured himself that there was some liquor on the premises.

Soon after this discovery, he "guessed he'd go into the house and see Bashy Turner awhile. He'd got something to tell her she ought to know," and with this excuse he left the barn. Out of sight, he buttoned his jacket, pulled his cap over his ears, and prepared to spend some time in the open air. He did not wait long, however, before from his hiding-place he saw three men come out from the barn, and go to a heap of straw by the shed, take out some flasks and drink.

"I said I wouldn't go to a huskin where there wasn't liquor, and I didn't," said one. "I filled my flask fore I started, and if I feel just right, I'll ask the deacon to take a



drink with me fore I start. I'll leave enough for that."

"You will, will you?" thought Jim; and five minutes after, the flasks were empty. Then he went to see Bashy, and told her what he had done.

"You done just right, and they'll be mad as hornets when they find it out," she replied. "I'll fix a mug of peppered cider purpose for them, so they won't take cold goin home."

"Well, don't you tell nobody."

"You needn't worry, Jim. I can keep my own secrets, and other folks' too. You go back to the barn, and we'll see how it comes out."

At length the last ear was husked, the last basket emptied, and one after another piled into the kitchen, ready for the supper which awaited them. Tables had been spread the whole length of the room, so that by dint of good management all were seated.

Those who waited upon the hungry crowd



thought a fast must have preceded the feast ; but Mrs. Campbell only smiled as they ate, congratulating herself that the oven and pantry held more in reserve. The boys, while eating heartily, found time to observe others, and lay up material for jokes in the future ; yet Jim Cragin was more serious than usual. His companions guessed something was the matter, and even his father looked at him in surprise.

“Goin to give us a mug of flip, Bashy?” asked one of the company who had brought his own liquor.

“Yes, if you like cider flip,” was the reply.

“Let’s see how good you can make it. ’Twill be better’n none.”

The peppers, opened long before, were in condition to flavor whatever should be poured upon them. Mugs of bubbling cider were soon prepared, Bashy taking care that the toppers should have no reason to call their drink flat.



"I say for't, Bashy, you put the seasonin into this!" exclaimed one.

"I thought that's what you wanted. You like to have a good *bite* to it, don't you?"

"Yes, but this is too mighty. I must have something to cool off with;" and three or four others making the same complaint, it was greeted with peals of laughter, and cutting jokes, until there was a perfect din of voices.

"Have some more flip?" asked she who presided over this part of the entertainment, as soon as there was a lull in the storm. "I've got my hand in, and the loggerhead hot, so I can make more, just as well as not. Wont you have another mug, Mr. Harris?"

"Not to-night, Bashy. But if ever you hear I'm froze to death, just give me a dose like what I've had, and I shall come to.—I say, you didn't put no spirit in that, did you?"

"I put in somethin warmin," was the reply; and there was another explosion of merriment as the victims had recourse to the mugs of



cold cider, which were constantly being replenished.

"Well, I'm going home," said one of the younger men. "I've had a good supper; cider too, and enough of it. A cold water huskin aint so bad, after all; and, Bashy, I'll send for you when I want some temperance flip. Good-night, all."

"Come, boys, we'd better go home," remarked Jim Cragin, hurrying to see the fun outside.

"Don't you want to ride?" asked his father.

"No, sir, I'd rather walk; but perhaps Sam'll get in when you come along."

"Sam aint ready to go yet," said Bashy. "I want to see him, and there's somethin to go to his mother, so he'd better ride all the way."

Jim did not stop to hear this, neither did he miss his friend.

"We've had a good supper, no mistake, and the deacon's done well, but I aint none of your new-fangled temperance folks. I believe in a little spirit, so I brought my flask



with me," and the speaker drew it from the heap of straw where it had been hidden.

"Here's another, and here's another. Take a drink;" and without observing that the flasks were empty, their owners passed them along.

"Where's your liquor?"

"Why, what's the matter?"

"O, nothin, only a man don't care much for——"

"Well, what's to pay? Say, Smith, is your flask empty too?"

"Yes," was the reply.

"And mine too," added the third.

"I should like to know the meaning of this."

"I can explain it," answered one of the bystanders with a shout. "You emptied them down your throats."

"No we didn't. Mine was more'n half full when we left it."

"Tell that where you aint known. We've all seen you before, and I guess you'll get along if you don't have any liquor. Bashy's



flip will keep you warm, and you can go into the report."

"Report be—"

"Hold up there; don't swear till you get off the deacon's premises. That report's goin to be a good thing, and I'll hear it read, if I live long enough. Guess you and I better jine the society, and be respectable."

By this time nearly all the husking party had gathered around the discomfited trio; some with words of mock condolence, and some with shouts of laughter. Jim Cragin returned to the house, and reported the result of his mischief. Sam Glines was ready with his basket; thanking Mrs. Campbell for her kindness with a happy smile.

"I hope you have enjoyed yourself this evening," she said.

"Yes, ma'am, I have," was the boy's reply. "I never went to a husking before; and I shouldn't come to-night if Jim hadn't asked mother, and I promised her I wouldn't drink any cider."



"And didn't you drink any?" asked Bashy.

"Why, no ma'am. I promised mother I wouldn't, and I never tell her a lie. She'd know it if I did."

"Well, tell her for me that you've been a good boy, and I'll be up and make your clothes week after next."

"Sam Glines!" called out Deacon Cragin; "come, you can ride as far as I go; you'll have walking enough after that. And the rest of you boys can pile in, as long as there's room."

Sam did not hesitate. He was glad to ride, for when left, he would have half a mile to walk alone, yet the light which shone from his home so warmed his heart that he thought little of the distance.

"Well, my son, did you like the huskin?" asked Aunt Betty, so soon as he had closed the door behind him.

"Yes, mother, we had a real good supper lots of beans, and pies, and cakes, and pickles, and apple-sauce; and I've brought you some-



thing, too, in that basket. Mrs. Campbell sent it, and said you must take it as a huskin present. I never heard of a huskin present before, did you?"

"No, Samuel, I never did;" and the poor woman's lips quivered with some unspoken emotion.

"See what's in the basket, mother. I tell you it's pretty heavy. I guess my arms would ached if I'd carried it all the way, though I'd been glad to bring it for you."

The basket had been packed by one who understood economizing room, and contained enough for several good suppers for the inmates of the log house.

"It's a nice present," said Mrs. Glines.

"And aint Mrs. Campbell kind, mother?"

"Very kind, though I'd rather earn what we have."

"But this is a present, mother. When I'm a man, I mean to give somebody a present; I'm goin to do all the good I can. Mr. Gibson said everybody could do some good, if



'twas only a little, and I've been tryin to begin. That's what made me chop on that old log yesterday, and I've got wood and chips enough to keep the fire to-day. To-morrow I'm goin to chop again; 'twont be but a little, but 'twill help some, wont it, mother?"

"Help some! Yes, everybody helps to make the world better or worse. Every act performed, and every word spoken, has some influence either for good or evil."

Mrs. Glines had exacted a promise from her boy that he would not drink cider. This promise, repeated, led to a train of thought in the minds of some of those who heard it, which prompted to a more moderate use of the beverage.

"I've pretty much made up my mind that I done wrong to-night without meanin to," said Bashy Turner, as Deacon Campbell came in from the barn, where he had been to see that all was safe.

"Done wrong! How?" he asked.



"Fixin so much cider. Some of them men were half fuddled, and I don't know but it's just as bad to get drunk on one thing as another. What do you think, deacon?"

"I don't know," he answered, with some hesitation. "I never thought much about it."

"Nor I neither, though I never did hold to pourin down a quart or two, as I've seen folks. But Sam Glines' mother made him promise her not to drink any, and he didn't taste of it to-night."

"Didn't he? Well, I'm glad of it. He's on the safe side, and Mrs. Glines knows what she's about. His father was an awful cider drinker, and 'twant safe to leave vinegar round where he was, if you wanted to keep it. But then, Bashy, I guess the pepper 'll offset against the cider. The last I saw of Harris, he was tryin to cool his mouth."

The emptied flasks were next considered.

"Who poured out the liquor?" asked Deacon Campbell.

"Nobody knows," answered Horace. "I



guess they drank it themselves, and 'twas a good thing they did. If they hadn't, somebody else would."

Bashy kept Jim's secret, and changed the subject of conversation by saying, "I thought of that report when the men were eatin their suppers. Most every one of them could tell somethin towards it. Ezry Nichols 'll have to begin pretty nigh home. His father's took his bed, and don't want nothin to eat."

"Who told you that?" asked Mrs. Campbell.

"Jim Cragin; and Joe told *him*. He says it's pretty hard gettin along. Now, you think Grandsir Nichols is a Christian, don't you?"

"Why, yes, I always thought so, though he's got a good deal of taste for liquor, and it seems to grow on him. I guess it's pretty apt to, as folks grow older."

"I guess so too. Mr. Safford said when a man got to be forty years old, he'd either drink a good deal more, or not so much as he did before; and you know the old deacons



didn't take but very little spirit the last of their lives."

"I know they didn't. I heard them talk about it. But I don't see what Ezry Nichols can do. His father can't be reasoned with much; and 'twould be pretty hard for the old man to deny himself. I thank the Lord that he called me to stop when he did. Now, I shant ruin myself, nor anybody else. I aint sure, though, but we're drinkin too much cider. What do you think, Horace?"

"I don't know, father. I guess there were some here to-night, as would be better off to-morrow mornin if they hadn't dranked any cider."

"I'm afraid you're right, my son; and if drinkin cider's wrong, I'll stop it. I've seen men get drunk on it."

"I guess you have, deacon. There was old Ben Tandy, who spent most of his time beggin cider, and he'd always get as drunk as a fiddler. Don't you remember him, Horace?"



"Yes; and I remember that he'd empty a quart mug without stopping to take breath."

"He'll do to go in the report," said Bashy. "He was on the town ten years; and the town took care of his wife much as twelve years. There was one bill added to the taxes. O dear! I wish I'd been sent to school more when I was young. I'd make out that report if I knew how to put the words together. Nobody needn't tell me that Hardhack aint poorer for what liquor's been dranked in it. I know better. Every cent I earnt till I was more than thirty years old went on account of liquor. Father and mother would both been on the town if it hadn't been for me. Then—but I could talk all night, and not come to an end. Mr. Gibson shall have them ten dollars, if I have to get up in the meeting and talk myself."

"I wish you would," responded Deacon Campbell. "I hope you'll talk everywhere you go. Talk to the young men. They need it."



"More than you know of, father," added Horace. "Folks don't know all that's going on."

"You wont break your pledge, my son?"

"Never!" was replied with emphasis.





## CHAPTER XI.

## A REPORT OF RUM'S DOINGS.



WELL might Horace Campbell say, "More than you know of." People had been blind—stone blind, it seemed to some who now, for the first time, saw with greatly improved vision. Where was the temperance of which they had boasted, sure that no reform was needed in Hardhack? Mr. Runnels told his wife he knew he should be beat, and advised Mr. Smith to have an extra five dollars in hand against the donation.

"I aint goin to give up yet," was the reply he received.

"You might as well, Smith. I guess the town records 'll beat us, if nothin else. I've been thinkin it over, and I aint mistaken."

"Well, for my part, I haint thought much



about it," responded Mr. Smith. "There'll be time enough for that, when it's settled. I haint heard that the committee's been round yet."

"They wont need to go round. George Ransom's got the town books."

"Then his job will be all the easier. But 'twill take somethin beside town books to make much of a story; and I aint goin to cry beat, till I hear the report. I'm goin to the meetin to hear that, and then I've done with the temperance folks. We never had any trouble as long as Priest Grimes lived, and we shouldn't now, if he was alive. He liked a little spirit himself."

"Well, yes, I suppose he did. But Mr. Gibson is a good man. Everybody says that."

Others talked of the report, wondering when Hardhack would be canvassed for the collection of facts, while the committee wisely kept silence. At the next meeting of the temperance society, Deacon Cragin gave notice that a report might be expected in two weeks.



"We shall meet in the town-house, and it is hoped there will be a full attendance of the people of Hardhack," he added.

"That's goin to be the turnin pint," said an old man, who declared himself anxious to know the truth. "I can remember back a good many years, and there's always been them in town that dranked more'n they ought to. There's been some good farms run through, and I know it's best to be careful about drinkin."

Bashy Turner, who was at work for Mrs. Glines, did not attend this meeting, but Sam gave so good an account of what transpired that she was quite satisfied.

"I guess we'll make a minister of you," she said. "You go to school this winter, and learn all you can towards it. The master's comin on Friday, Pheny Whitney said, and she's got her house in apple-pie order for him. I expect number one 'll have the best school in town, and you ought to be one of the best scholars."



"I'm goin to," answered the boy. "Mother has saved the money to buy me some new books, but next year I'll buy my own."

"That's right, Sam; do for yourself. Mr. Gibson says the smartest man he knows of was once a poor boy, who didn't have enough to eat half the time, till he earned it for himself. That's poorer than you be."

"So 'tis, but you see I've got a good mother."

Chop! chop! chop! The ring of the axe was not very loud, although the blows were sharp and quick. The chopper was a boy, and the results of his labor small, but with a resolute will, each day would increase these results.

"Steady and sure," thought Bashy, as she gave her young friend a nod of encouragement; "that's the way things are brought about in this world."

So the temperance movement was gradually gaining ground, although now, as at the first, more than half the members of the society



were women and children. Those who opposed the reform "waited for light," as they said; and Deacon Willey, who was really astonished to find so respectable a minority arrayed against them, counselled moderation.

"I guess this stir will blow over, and if it don't, there's time enough to look after it. 'Taint best to make trouble in the church, and I suppose, to come right down to the bottom of the case, other folks have just as good right to let liquor alone, as we have to use it."

"'Taint that," responded Deacon Porter; "they want to bring everybody to think just as they do. My grandsir was killed in the Revolution, and I aint goin to sign away my liberty."

Ignorance was some excuse for this foolish speech; but even now, there are men who see slavery in a temperance pledge, and boast of freedom and independence while selling their birthright for a mess of pottage.

Mr. Whitney and Ezra Nichols spent most



of one day with George Ransom in the discharge of the duty to which they had been appointed. Item after item was read from the town books, most of them payments for the board of paupers, funeral expenses, and relief granted to poor families. Thousands of dollars had been spent in this way, for which, of course, the people had been taxed.

"I'm surprised," said Mr. Whitney. "It's worse than I thought, and these figures don't tell half the story. Misery and wretchedness can't be reckoned in dollars and cents."

"True, Mr. Whitney; I'm beginning to see that, and it's the strangest thing in the world that we haint seen it before. We've heard a great deal of preaching about the depravity of man, and if there was ever anything would make men more depraved every way, it's liquor, and I know it."

"Yes, and we needn't go far to find it out. It's been a common saying, ever since I can remember, 'Such a man would be a good man if he'd let liquor alone.' I've



heard it a hundred times, long before there was any talk about temperance."

"So have I," replied George Ransom; "and those are the very men it's the hardest to reach. Bashy Turner's father was kind-hearted naturally, but liquor made him ugly as a wild beast. And there's another side of the story Betty Glines could tell, poor woman; but we shall have to leave that out of our report. Mr. Whitney, I wish you'd put the report in order. You understand such things better than I do. I've got the facts, but they might be made more impressive, as Priest Grimes used to say."

"Plain facts are just what we need, Mr. Ransom. Our people can understand them, and the fewer words used, the better. Only you might tell which of the paupers were made poor by their own drinking, and which by somebody else. Some old folks ought to have been taken care of by their children, and some children been taken care of by their parents. We'll try to give all their due."



"And shall I read the names?"

"I guess not, unless they're called for. We don't want to hurt anybody's feelings, unless it's necessary. Mr. Runnels wont push the matter very far."

"But he aint the only one to be thought of," said Ezra Nichols. "There'll be some determined not to believe, and we must be prepared for them."

Wednesday evening came, and there was a large audience gathered in the town-house, although there had been a great effort on the part of some to make this meeting a failure. Mr. Runnels and Mr. Smith were present, eager to hear the report which had been so quietly prepared. For obvious reasons, Mr. Gibson declined speaking upon this report, and George Hudson, the new teacher, had been invited to make some remarks.

Facts are stubborn things, and long before George Ransom had completed his list, there were many whispered comments in different parts of the room.



"I'd like to make some inquiries, now Mr. Ransom's got through."

Hardly was he through when this remark was made, but Deacon Cragin informed the speaker that inquiries were in order.

"I want to know where you got them figures."

"From the town records," replied George Ransom.

"Does anybody know any thing about 'em but you?"

"Yes, sir. Mr. Whitney and Mr. Nichols have both seen the records, and both gentlemen are here to speak for themselves."

"How much did you say it all footed up?"

The amount was repeated.

"And you say 'twas all on account of drinkin liquor."

"Yes, sir; and can prove it."

"I give up," exclaimed Mr. Runnels, springing to his feet. "Mr. Gibson shall have the five dollars, and neighbor Smith's all ready with his money; I can tell that by his looks.



I aint goin to keep five dollars out of what my wife generally carries, either; I'm goin to be fair and above board. The temperance folks are right, and we're wrong. There's no doubt in my mind but we've paid a good round tax for the privilege of drinkin rum."

"The whole country has paid a good round tax for the same privilege, if privilege it be."

George Hudson said this, and then proceeded to speak of the evils of intemperance. He described the downward career of several young men with whom he had been acquainted, graphically portraying the sorrow of their friends, and the bitterness of disappointed hopes.

"These young men learned to drink at home, with fathers and mothers; in the circle of loved ones their doom was sealed. Many of you will say they should have drank more moderately, and perhaps they might; but the love for intoxicating liquor often becomes a passion which it is difficult to control, and with some, there must be drunkenness or



total abstinence—there is, for them, no moderation.”

When Mr. Hudson sat down, every man, woman and child in district number one was proud of their teacher, whether endorsing his sentiments or not. He knew how to talk, and would have a great influence over his scholars.

Much good was accomplished by this meeting. The sympathies of some were enlisted who had before stood aloof. Mr. Welcome was there, and listened as for his life, while the young stranger was speaking. His Benjamin wandered, he knew not where. Poverty, sickness, and crime, might each or all have counted this son their victim. And was it true, that he himself had helped to ruin this child of his love? Mr. Welcome was a man who seldom manifested any emotion, but he could not quite stifle the sighs which burst from his laboring heart, or repress the tears which filled his eyes.

Other parents, whose children had failed



to realize their expectations, questioned if this habit of universal drinking was the cause. Sons, noble and truthful, had degenerated into worthless men; daughters, pure, beautiful and loving, had been wedded to lives of poverty and wretchedness.

After the meeting closed, several asked George Ransom the names of those who had been supported by the town, one saying, "I never thought we had so many paupers in Hardhack. We've been reckoned well-to-do folks generally."

"So we have been, but we might done better, if we'd got up the temperance society thirty years ago," remarked Deacon Cragin. "You and I would had more money at interest, and done a great deal better by our families."

"Perhaps we might, but I don't see it yet."

"I hope you will before long," and here the deacon's attention was claimed by a middle-aged man, who came forward, leaning



upon a cane. "Glad to see you, Mr. Wilson. I didn't know you was here."

"I wanted to come," was the reply.

"And I hope you feel paid for comin."

"I'm glad I come—though I've heard things that 'll make me feel bad all the rest of my life. My old mother was supported by the town."

"But nobody ever blamed you for that."

"I don't know as they did, but I guess the money I've dranked up would kept her. I've always been weakly, and the doctor said spirit was good for me; but he must been mistaken. I heard Mr. Safford, and since then I've been thinkin, and I've given up my drams. I was most sick the first few days, and couldn't stick to my bench long to a time; but I've got so now, I feel better'n I did before."

"I'm glad to hear that, Mr. Wilson, and now I guess you're ready to join our society."

"Yes, I am, deacon, though I didn't really



want to come hobblin clear across the room, when every body'd be lookin at me;" and the usually pale face of the speaker flushed crimson at the thought of his deformity. One more name was added to the list of the pledged, and a brighter day dawned for him whose life had been darkened by a father's sin.

The report which had been read was pronounced satisfactory, and yet many said it proved nothing in regard to moderate drinking. They believed in moderation, and they should continue to practise it.

"Don't you drink any more liquor than you did ten years ago?"

This abrupt question was asked so pleasantly, that those who had boasted of moderation could not but answer it in the same spirit.

"I don't know as I do," said one. "Perhaps I do take a *little* more sometimes, when I've got a hard day's work on hand. I'm older than I was ten years ago."

"Yes, but you're only forty-five now. You



ought to be stronger than you was ten years ago."

"Well, I aint, if I ought to be. I get up in the morning sometimes, feeling pretty old."

"I'll tell you what makes you feel so," said Deacon Campbell. "It's the liquor you dranked the day before. I know, for I tried it. I'm renewin my age since I left off."

"And you expect to go into the woods this winter, without takin a drop of spirit?"

"I do expect just that. My boys are all goin to school, and I shant have any hired man, unless I take hold of an extra job. So you can see where the work's comin."

"I thought you'd keep Horace to home this winter. Folks say he is quite a good scholar."

"He is, and I hope he'll be a good deal better one if he lives. We've got a good master in our district, and folks can't afford to keep their children to home. Anyway, I can't, if I do have to work hard."



"Your master's going to be a minister, aint he?"

"That's what they say, and I guess he's cut out for it. He talks well."

"Yes, he's a tonguey fellow, whether he's right or wrong in what he says."

"He's right," said Deacon Campbell, earnestly. "I know he's right, and I thank God for revealing it to me."

"I suppose too, you're on Mr. Gibson's side."

"Certain I am, and shall do everything I can to sustain him."

"The three deacons that are against him aint neither of them here to-night, and I heard Deacon Porter said he never wanted to hear Mr. Gibson preach again."

"I heard he said so," replied Deacon Campbell. "But I hope he'll be brought to a better mind, and all the rest of you before long."

"I haint nothin to say against Mr. Gibson," was the response. "I don't think its right



though, to bring secular subjects into the pulpit."

"What do you mean by secular subjects?"

"Anything that don't belong to religion and don't have anything to do with it. Temperance aint religion."

"No, but it has a great deal to do with it, and our society is goin to ask Mr. Gibson to preach a sermon on the subject."

"'Twill make trouble if he does, deacon. I can stand it, but there's them that wont."

Those who listened to Deacon Campbell could hardly realize that it was he who spoke. Always harsh and arbitrary in his manners, he had been respected without being loved; but in the last few weeks a great change had passed over him. Never a harsh word rose to his lips, or an angry thought stirred his breast, without recalling the agony of that moment when he feared that he had killed his son.

"We could talk here all night, but I guess it's best to go home," at length said Deacon



Cragin. "This has been our best meetin, and I wish everbody'd heard that report. I've learned a good deal I didn't know before, and I guess other folks have too."

The three deacons opposed to the temperance movement, not only remained away from this meeting themselves, but forbade any member of their families being present. "You'll stay at home, sir," Deacon Flanders had said to his oldest son, who asked permission to go to the town-house.

"Better let him go, if he wants to," said his mother.

"It's no place for him," was the reply. "I know what I'm about, and don't want any interference."

There was nothing to do but submit, and Eleazer Flanders remained at home that evening, wondering if it was his duty to obey so unreasonable a command. Just before time for retiring, his father mixed a glass of liquor and offered him a share, but this he positively refused.



"Take it," was said sternly.

"No, sir, I don't want it," was the answer.

"I don't need it."

"I'm the best judge of what you need. Drink!"

"Husband, let the boy do as he's a mind to about that," exclaimed Mrs. Flanders, laying down her knitting. "You kept him to home from the temperance meetin, and 'taint right to make him drink that liquor if he don't want it.—Leazer, I'm glad you don't want it," she added, turning to her son.

This recalled the deacon to the wrong he would have done, and draining the glass himself, he left the room.

"It's a shame I couldn't go to meetin to-night," said the boy. "I wouldn't dranked that liquor if he'd killed me for not doin it. I aint goin to drink any more, and he cant make me."

"I hope you wont," replied Mrs. Flanders. "I don't want to encourage your disobeyin your father, but he's a good deal stirred up



now, and goes too far. I'm sorry, but I can't help it."

"Father's wrong, and the minister's right. I've heard enough to know that, if I aint but fifteen years old. Father's always scoldin about Uncle Lem, and all that ails him is drinkin liquor. If it wasn't for that, he'd be the best man in town. Don't you suppose he'd leave off and join the society, if you asked him, mother?"

"I don't know, Leazer. I don't see him very often. Your father don't want him to come here, and he knows it; and 'taint more'n once or twice a year I can get a chance to ride over there. Most I hear of him's by Bashy Turner. She and your Aunt Sally were always great friends, and Bashy goes there as often as she can."

"Can't we go over there sometime together, mother? Father aint usin the horse, and I can drive as well as he can."

"There aint nothin to hinder if he's willin, and I'll ask him about it to-morrow, if he



feels pretty well. I wish Brother Lem would do better."

"I wish so too, mother, and there aint but one way. John Whitney told me that Mr. Hudson said there was some folks couldn't help bein drunkards if they dranked any liquor at all, and I believe Uncle Lem's one of them."

"I'm afraid he is, and it makes me feel bad when I think of him," was the reply. "He was a good brother when we were to home together. Mother always went to him when she wanted anything done, and I thought more of him than I did of all the rest. Father used to say he ought to been a girl, he was so tender-hearted."

"Well, mother, we'll try to reform him;" and the boy's face grew radiant with this resolve.

Perhaps no one else in town had thought of the reform of Lemuel Weston, although his good qualities were acknowledged by all. But Eleazer Flanders was in earnest, and



would not be easily turned from his purpose. What he heard of the temperance meeting, and especially of what George Hudson had said, only confirmed him in his decisions.

"I never 'll drink another drop of liquor as long as I live," he said to himself, on his way home from school. "I'll join the temperance society as soon as I'm twenty-one, and I'll do all I can to help it along before then."

Deacon Flanders, somewhat ashamed of his conduct the previous evening, had been unusually gracious during the day, and at once acceded to his wife's proposal to visit her brother.

"I want Leazer to go with me," she said.


"Well, I don't know as I've any objections, only Lem aint the right kind of a man for him to be with."

There was more hope for the drunkard than for this moderate drinker, secure in his own vaunted strength.



## CHAPTER XII.

UNCLE LEM.

“ATHER! father! here is Aunt Susan and Leazer!” exclaimed little Abby Weston, running to the window, and clapping her hands in delight.

“Susan come?” asked the man in reply. “I’m always glad to see her, but we aint very well off to have company to-day, be we, Sally? I ought to got some flour and other things yesterday. I’m sorry it happened so, Susan don’t come very often;” and with these words he opened the door to welcome his visitors. “Glad to see you, sister, though you’ve come to a poor place. Leazer, how you do grow; I can’t hardly keep track of you. Go right in, both of you, and I’ll take care the horse.”

By this time Mrs. Weston, who had stopped



to brush the hearth and push a table from the middle of the floor, came forward, with two children clinging to her dress.

"Good mornin, Sally. You and the children well this mornin?" asked her sister-in-law.

"I aint very well," replied the poor woman; "I've had the headache, and haint been hardly able to keep round this week. Leazer, how do you do?"

"O, I'm well," was the hearty response. "I'm always well when things go to suit me, and I'm just exactly suited this mornin'."

"Well, I'm glad if you are," said his aunt, smiling, despite both headache and heartache. "The children were talkin about you yesterday. Abby remembered the nuts and apples you brought her the last time you was here."

"And I brought something for her and Sophy this time. I didn't forget them," and he drew his cousins gently from their mother.



"We are going to have a good visit together to-day."

While this was said, Mrs. Flanders had laid aside her cloak and hood, taken a hasty survey of the room, and satisfied herself that her visit was inopportune. The breakfast had been so scanty that not a crumb was left. A bone had been scraped until it was polished like ivory, and there were some potatoes on the hearth ready for roasting.

This was the home of a naturally kind-hearted man, and such the provision he made for his family. How poor and wretched! How degraded he felt himself, lingering in the old tumble-down barn, trying to devise some plan by which a comfortable dinner could be provided. He had professed to spend the last fortnight in hunting, but this was only an excuse for idle dissipation, while those who looked to him for support had lived on coarse and meagre fare.

His calculations were interrupted by the cheerful voice of his nephew. "I was afraid



you'd forget I was here, Uncle Lem, and I came on purpose to see you."

"Did you? Well, you're a good boy, and I'm glad to see you. I'm ready to go in now, though I don't know but I've got to go to the village this forenoon."

"What, to-day, uncle? That 'll take all the time, and I shant see you any. Go to-morrow; wont that do just as well?"

"No, 'twont, Leazer. I'm sorry, but—I'll go in and see your mother."

Yet he made some excuse for delaying, so that Eleazer had ample time to return to the house, and tell his mother that Uncle Lem talked of going to the village. "Don't let him, will you, mother?" added the boy.

"We'll see," was the reply. "Bring in the box and jug."

Mrs. Weston was even more anxious than her husband in regard to the dinner. To borrow, she was ashamed, and beg she *would* not, while it was utterly impossible for her



to buy. So painfully conscious was she of their poverty, that she could with difficulty sustain her part of the conversation.

"I suppose you don't have milk," said Mrs. Flanders.

"No, only when the neighbors bring in some. I wanted Lemuel to keep a cow last year, but he didn't."

"Well, I brought over some milk, and a few other things. I hope you wont be affronted, Sally."

"No, Susan, I'll be thankful. We never were quite so bad off before, as we are now. I haint anything in the house but a little meal and some potatoes, and when they're gone, I don't know where the next meal's comin from. Lemuel haint done much work lately, and I'm most discouraged. I wish you'd talk with him. He thought some about goin to the temperance meetins, but your husband told him he'd better not. I wish he hadn't said so, for Lemuel needs to go. Bashy Turner talked to him when she was



up here, till he most promised her he'd go once."

Eleazer came in with the box, and its contents were displayed. Cakes for the children, bread, pies, cooked meat, butter, cheese, and maple sugar.

"Here's enough to last you a day or two, and I filled the largest jug I had with milk," said the donor of this food. "Most likely it'll come cold, so you can freeze up the milk, and keep it quite a spell."

"O, can't I have some to drink?" cried Sophy, the youngest child.

"Yes, dear, you can have all you want," replied her aunt; and the child was made happy by having her tin cup filled with the nourishing drink.

Abby, too, presented her cup, and the children were enjoying the rich treat of cakes and milk when their father came in.

"I'll give you a piece, pa," said Sophy, reaching out her cake to him. "Aunt Susan brought it."



"Yes, and mother's got a lot of things," added Abby. "Why don't we have some all the time? Shouldn't you like meat and pies better than roast potatoes? I think I should."

Lemuel Weston stood, confused and ashamed. "I don't want any cake," he said at length. "Eat it yourselves. Susan, you're a good sister," he added. "I'm sorry them things were needed, but I guess there aint much in the house to eat. I haint done just right by my family."

"Nor by yourself either, Brother Lem. I want you to do different. There aint no need of your bein poor. Leazer and I wanted to come over, purpose to talk with you. He thinks a good deal of you, and these large temperance meetins in town have stirred him up."

"Does Leazer go?"

"No, he don't. But he would if his father were willin, and I try to encourage him all I can. I'm sorry the deacon don't see things



in a little different light. If I was a man, I'd join the temperance society the first thing I done."

"You would, Susan?"

"Yes, I would."

"So would I, Uncle Lem," chimed in Eleazer. "It's a shame I can't now, but I shall be twenty-one if I live long enough, and then you'll see what I'll do. I've took the pledge now just as strong as though I'd signed my name in one of the meetings. I never'll drink another drop of liquor as long as I live. Never!" added the boy, with an emphasis which showed how thoroughly in earnest he was. "Come, Uncle Lem, you make the same promise, and see how much better off you'll be in a year from now. Didn't you hear Mr. Safford's sermon?"

"No, Leazer, I didn't."

"Well, you ought to, and everybody else. He kept us boys awake, and some of us remember what he said."

"Why, you're a real cold water man, aint



you, Leazer?" said Mr. Weston with a forced laugh.

"Yes, I am, and you ought to be. If you was, you'd live in a better house, and have better things."

"Leazer!" There was a reproof in this one word spoken by his mother, and he made an awkward apology for his last remarks.

"Don't say anything about it," responded his uncle. "You told the truth, and I know it. I drink too much liquor, but I've got so used to it, I don't know as I could leave it off if I tried."

"Yes, you could, Uncle Lem. There's no need of drinking, if you don't want to. I know *I* can help it."

"It's different with you, Leazer. You haint got such a habit as I have."

"Can't you give it up, brother? You've got to grow better or worse, and it don't seem as though we could bear to have you any worse. Mother feels bad about you."

"I know it, Susan, and I feel bad about it



myself. I wish sometimes I'd never been born. Yes, I do wish so;" and the unhappy man threw himself into a chair and wept. His children ran to him, but he put them gently aside without answering their questions. "What can I do, Susan? Tell me, and I'll try. You'll wish you hadn't come to-day; we never were quite so bad off before. I've been growin worse."

"There aint but one thing for you to do," replied Mrs. Flanders, speaking calmly and decidedly.

"What is that?" asked her brother.

"Make the same promise Leazer has, and keep it. There aint no other way for you ever to be any better than you be now."

"But father always took spirit, and he wan't hurt by it. He was a good man."

"I know he was, but he might been better if he hadn't dranked any liquor. Folks didn't understand about it then. I wish you'd heard Mr. Safford, and I wish you could hear Mrs. Holden."



"I've heard Bashy Turner talk," was the reply. "She's a good deal engaged. I guess I should gone to the last temperance meetin if it hadn't been for your husband."

"Don't mind what father says about it," exclaimed Eleazer. "He's dreadful set, and on the wrong side too. He kept me to home when I wanted to go, but he wont keep me always, and he wont make me drink liquor, either. Come, Uncle Lem, do promise, wont you? I come over purpose to get you to say you wouldn't drink any more."

Mrs. Weston had never thought of asking her husband to become a total abstainer. She only wished him to drink moderately, not knowing, in her ignorance, that this was impossible.

"I was going to the village to get some things," he said at length. "There aint any tea in the house, and we shall want some for dinner."

"No, we shant," replied his sister. "We'll have some corn coffee. That'll be good enough,



with sugar and milk. I want to see you, and I'd rather not have any dinner than have you go off. Stay, and we'll have a good visit, just as we used to. I wish mother was here."

Lemuel Weston did not echo this wish, although he loved his mother. His home was no place for her.

"You'd better make a fire in the other room," said his wife. "Then you and Susan can talk there by yourselves, while I sweep and clean up here. We didn't get up very early this morning, and my work's all behind."

Fortunately there was plenty of wood, so this suggestion was received with favor, and a fire was speedily kindled. Eleazer produced the nuts and apples he had brought, occupying one corner with his cousins, who forgot all trouble while listening to his amusing stories.

"Father tells us stories sometimes," whispered Abby.

"Father's got a black bottle he drinks something out of," added Sophy. "Have you one?"



"No, I hope not," was the reply. "I don't like black bottles."

"I don't either. I wish father didn't have one. Mother always looks sorry when he takes it out of the cupboard."

Not for many months had there been such a well-spread table in this poor house, nor so cheerful a group gathered around it. The family were dressed in their best, clean, and with neatly combed hair. The children were delighted, wishing they could have such a dinner every day.

"I wish we could," said their mother, with a sigh. "If there was any way I could earn it, I would." Her husband rose and left the table. "I'm sorry I said any thing," she added. "I wish I hadn't, he lays it so to heart, but I've wished a good many times I could earn something myself. I can't though, as I aint very strong, and it's as much as I can do to do my own work."

"Don't blame yourself in the least, Sally. The fault aint with you, and we all know



it very well. I guess I'll have a talk with brother Lem."

The interview between brother and sister was so prolonged, that those who waited in the adjoining room became impatient. When they appeared, the face of one was smiling, while that of the other was serious and earnest.

"Now sit down, and finish your dinner," said Mrs. Weston

"Yes, Sally, we'll sit right down. We've kept things waitin a good while, but we had a good deal to say. Come, brother."

"I don't want any more dinner," was the reply.

"Well, sit down and drink some coffee with me. We don't have a chance to be together very often, and I think this coffee's pretty good."

"'Tis good," was replied; and the speaker sat down, while his children clung to him, eager to know what troubled him.

"Aint you going to make that promise?"



asked Eleazer in a coaxing tone. "Do, and then we'll see how much better off we'll be."

"You're well enough off," was the evasive reply.

"No, I aint. I can't go to the temperance meetings, and I want you to go for me. Wont you go to the next one."

"What? Down to number one? It's a long tramp down there."

"I know it, but you tramp as far as that, hunting."

"So I do, Leazer, and taint no use makin excuses. I'll go if I'm able to, and most likely I shall be."

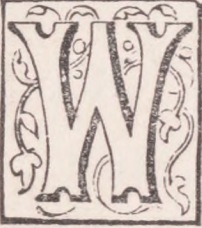
"Good! Now wont you promise about the liquor."

"Ask your mother about that, when you're goin home," answered Lem Weston; and a glance from his mother warned the boy to say no more on the subject.



## CHAPTER XIII.

## THE SCHOOLMASTER'S "LECTUR."

“E'VE had a good visit, and I guess we've done some good too,” said Mrs. Flanders, when alone with her son. “Your uncle promised not to drink any liquor for a month, and I'm in hopes he'll give it up for the rest of his life. If your father wasn't so opposed, I'd ask Mr. Gibson to talk to him; but I don't feel like sayin much now.”

“I guess Bashy Turner 'll ask him,” replied Eleazer. “She knows all about temperance. I'm glad you took that box. If Uncle Lem had gone to the village he might got drunk.”

“May be,” answered Mrs. Flanders; and then they lapsed into silence, thinking, perhaps, of the reception they would meet at home.



Deacon Porter had been moved to call upon his brother, and the interview had not increased the amiability of this brother. Few questions were asked that evening, except by the children, who felt themselves aggrieved by being left at home.

"Deacon Porter's been here, and he thinks we'd better have a church meetin, and express our minds about Mr. Gibson," said Deacon Flanders to his wife. "I don't know just what to think about it. Mr. Gibson's a good man, but he's goin too far. Scriptur wont bear him out in it, and I'm afraid there's got to be a division in the church. Deacon Cragin and Deacon Campbell are ready to go all lengths, and some of the women seem about crazy. There's Bashy Turner talkin to everybody, and determined to be heard. She ought to know her place."

"She does, and fills it well," was the reply. "She kept her father and mother off from the town, and if anybody's a right to talk about temperance she has. She's a good woman, and



it's a pity there wasn't more like her. She never misses a chance to do anybody a good turn. That winter you was so sick she did more for you than *I* could, with a baby in my arms, and you'd never come through that sickness if it hadn't been for her. Don't say a word against Bashy. We all know she speaks right out just what she thinks; but she don't mean any hurt."

"I know that, but she don't show any moderation. The temperance folks are all right with her, and every body else all wrong."

"Well, husband, I guess it's so. I'm of Bashy's mind, and if you won't help the society along, I hope you wont try to hinder it."

The deacon looked at his wife in astonishment. "Who've you seen? Who's been talkin with you?" he asked.

"I've seen brother Lem and his wife; they are very poor; and I've been talkin with them and Leazer."



"Leazer's got a good many foolish notions in his head; I must get them out."

"Well, don't ever try to make him drink liquor again," said his mother; "I'm on his side about that. I don't want him to turn out as some other boys have here in Hardhack, and he shan't, if I can help it."

Not often did Mrs. Flanders assert her independence in this way. It was easier to yield than to oppose her husband, but in this case she was determined to stand by her son.

"I know what's best for Leazer," was the response; "I'm his father."

"And I'm his mother, husband. If he never drinks any liquor, he can't be a drunkard, and I mean he shall keep on the safe side."

"Then you're goin to encourage him in disobedience," said the deacon, sternly.

"I'm goin to encourage him in temperance, and I hope he'll grow up to be a good man. We've got other children, too, and it's our duty to keep them from temptation as



much as we can. I've heard you say that a good many times."

The deacon, somewhat mollified by this last remark, and being really a Christian, although strangely blind in this matter, answered seriously: "I want to do my duty to my children, but I don't want Leazer to set himself up to know more'n I do; 'taint accordin to Scriptur."

"Do you want him to drink as much liquor as you do?" asked Mrs. Flanders.

"I don't drink much," was the evasive reply.

"You drink in the morning."

"Yes; my stomach feels bad, and I need a little spirit."

"Then you generally drink at noon."

"Sometimes."

"Then if anybody comes in—"

"I must be sociable, you know, and offer somethin to company."

"Then you drink again before you go to bed; that makes four times a day."



"But don't you take a little spirit yourself, wife?"

"I know I have. I thought I must; but I've got done with it. Leazer and I have took a pledge by ourselves, and we're goin to keep it, no matter what happens. I hope Brother Lem will join us. Leazer's all engaged about it, and his uncle thinks so much of him, I guess he'll bring it about."

"Lem's growin worse and worse. Somebody told me yesterday that he hadn't done a day's work for a month."

"You know what's the matter with him, husband. If he'd let liquor alone he'd do well enough."

"There aint no need of goin all lengths, as he does. He and some others go as far one way, as the temperance folks do the other. I believe in a middlin course."

"Well, if you do, take it for yourself, but don't try to make other folks. There's them that can't, and Brother Lem's one of them. He's promised to go to the next temperance



meetin, and I hope you wont say nothing to discourage him."

"I don't have much to do with him, and don't want to, as long as he goes on so."

"But you have said somethin to him about the temperance meetins."

Well, yes, I guess I did," replied the deacon, with some hesitation. "I wont say no more though. He can do as he's a mind to, for all me. I wish Mr. Safford had preached a gospel sermon when he come over here. There's more division in the church than there ever was before. There's Deacon Cragin and Deacon Campbell—we've always agreed till now, and I don't see what turned Deacon Campbell. When he was here visitin, he thought just as the rest of us did."

"Perhaps he heard about Horace. You know you said the deacon would have trouble with him, and if a man wants his children to do right, he must do right himself. It's always best to be on the safe side."

This conversation produced a decided effect



upon Deacon Flanders, and he said less in regard to the mooted question; and when Mr. Gibson preached an earnest, practical sermon upon temperance, he made no unkind criticisms.

"It's our dooty to call a meetin of the church," said Deacon Porter, greatly exasperated. "Folks are gettin to think more of this new kind of doctrine than they do of the Bible. There wasn't but six to the prayer-meetin. I called Wednesday night, and the school-house in number one was full. There's no tellin where this 'll stop, if there aint somethin done. Deacon Willey stands back, and the brunt of it comes on us, Brother Flanders. Can't you come over some time this week?"

"Not this week," was the answer. "I've got to be busy, and I don't think it's best to make trouble for Mr. Gibson. He means well, and he told a good deal of truth to-day, deacon. You can't deny that."

"I aint goin to say nothin about that. I



tried to fix my mind on spiritooal things. I want to hear Scriptur preached."

"There was a good deal of Scriptur in the sermon," replied Deacon Flanders; but this assertion went for nothing with his companion.

The strongest temperance men in Hardhack, if the minister be excepted, lived in district number one; and they, with the aid of the new teacher, succeeded in making their meetings attractive and interesting. There was sure to be a full house, as, in addition to those who really loved the cause, some went from curiosity, some to hear the singing, and some to meet their friends.

George Hudson was invited to read an essay, or, as the old folks said, to "give a lectur," and it was generally known that he had accepted the invitation. Of course, a crowd was expected, but so much had been said in regard to the town-house being used, that it was thought best not to go there. The school-house was full long before the ap-



pointed time, and still people refused to go away, after being told that they could not even find standing room.

"Come to-morrow night, and Mr. Hudson will repeat his lectur," at length said Deacon Cragin to those who waited.

Lem Weston heard this message, and said, "I cant come to-morrow night. I've walked three miles in the snow, and I don't want to go home without hearin somethin."

"Well, we'll try and make room for you some way," responded the deacon. "Six miles is a pretty long tramp for one night. I guess one of my boys will give up his seat, and wait till to-morrow."

"Who is it, father?" asked Jim, when told that his seat was wanted for some one else.

"Lem Weston," was the whispered reply. "He says he can't come to-morrow, and you can."

"I'll go," said the boy quickly. "I guess he'll sign the paper, but he's bigger than I be, and will want more room. Come, Sam, you



go with me," he added, addressing Sam Glines. "I'll tell your mother about it, and she'll let you come again to-morrow."

These two boys going out, there was room for Mr. Weston; and Mr. Hudson observing this, proposed that all his scholars should leave the house.

"I will repeat my essay to-morrow evening, and endeavor to make it a pleasant occasion for us all," he said. "Of course I have no authority to command you, but I shall consider it a personal favor if you will do so."

Every scholar moved, anxious to oblige their teacher, even at the cost of some self-denial, comforting themselves with the thought that to-morrow would soon come. No one else was obliged to leave, except a few who lived near, and thus all dissatisfaction was avoided.

"Somebody must have been tellin' him about me," thought Lemuel Weston as he listened. "He means me all the time;" and yet the poor, unfortunate man was not angry. Thankful that



his long walk was not in vain, he counted himself privileged in hearing what was said.

George Hudson, understanding the people to whom he was speaking, indulged in no flowers of rhetoric, but talked straight on, calling sin and debauchery by their rightful names. He related some anecdotes, drew illustrations from every-day life, and enforced all by an appeal to the Bible.

How everybody wished the incorrigible deacons were present! With what a triumphant air Bashy Turner looked round upon the audience! She had gained some new arguments with which to assail the strongholds of prejudice and opposition.

She did not take notes, but she could remember, and Deacon Flanders would be sure to hear a synopsis of the lecture. If he could be convinced, a great point would be gained, and she had some hope of this. She had called at Lemuel Weston's since the visit of his sister and nephew, and there learned much which encouraged her. "I guess he'll come



round," she said when speaking of the deacon. "He's dreadful set, but means to do right, and we're goin to have new light on this thing."

After Mr. Hudson had concluded, there was an opportunity to join the society, and Deacon Cragin made a few remarks in regard to it. He spoke of his own experience, assuring his friends and neighbors that abstinence had been of great benefit to him.

"I don't feel half so cold and shaky in a cold mornin, as I used to," he said. "I don't feel half so cross, either, and I can work easier than I used to. Things go along to suit me, and every day I live, I believe more and more in temperance. I don't know but you'll get tired of hearin me talk, but I'm anxious to have you all try this good way of livin. We aint goin to tell you what you *shall* do, and what you *shant*, but if you want to be well and happy, and get forehanded, you'd better join our society, and help us along. I hope we shall have some new names to-night."



Lemuel Weston trembled as he rose to go forward. Realizing the struggle total abstinence would cost him, he could not take the pledge unmoved. All eyes were fixed upon him, and many breathed a silent prayer as he took up the pen to sign his name. Then came the question, Would he keep this pledge? For then, as now, drunkenness so blunted the moral sensibilities of its victims, that promises were lightly made and lightly broken.

One month had this man resisted temptation, endured the jeers of his companions, and battled with his own depraved appetite. Standing now where two ways met, one leading upward and the other downward, he made deliberate choice between the two. There was a breathless silence as he turned again to the large audience, with face pale and haggard, yet eloquent with a firm resolve.

He was making his way to the door, when Deacon Campbell whispered, "I want to see.



you after the meetin. I want to get you to work for me."

"I'll wait out doors," was the reply. "I can't stay here."

The deacon followed him out. "I'm glad for what you've done to-night, Lem. You'll be glad all your life," and two hard hands were clasped in sympathy. "We've all been wrong about drinking, and it's high time we started right. I wouldn't go back for anything. You wont, I know."

"I don't mean to go back," answered Mr. Weston. "But it's goin to be hard work for me."

"Don't let it be hard work; and that makes me think what I wanted to see you for. I've just made up my mind to get out some lumber this winter, and I can't do it alone very well. If you're a mind to help me, I guess we can agree about wages. What say?"

"I'll come," was the quick response. "I shall be glad to, but—"



"But what, Lem? Say anything you want to."

"Well, my family aint very well off, and—"

"You want to be paid as you go along?"

"Yes, at first," said the man, with a sigh of relief. "If you'd let me have some meat, and a bushel or two of grain, 'twould be a great help."

"You can have the grain. There wont be no trouble about that; and I'll expect you in the morning as early as you're a mind to come."

By the time this matter was settled the meeting was closed, and others coming out, Lemuel Weston walked rapidly away. In no mood for talking or receiving congratulations, he hurried on, until some one sprang into the path before him, with a shout which really startled him.

"Why, Uncle Lem, did I scare you?" asked Eleazer Flanders. "I didn't mean to, but I've been waiting here ever so long, and I was



afraid I should miss seeing you.”—All this in one breath, with chattering teeth, which did not add to the distinctness of his words.

“You’re half froze, Leazer,” said his uncle. “You shouldn’t staid here so, in the cold.”

“But I wanted to be sure and see you, and I was afraid you’d get by if I staid over to Mr. Grannis’ any longer. Did you sign the paper?”

“Yes, Leazer, I did. Tell your mother; and tell her, too, I’m going to work for Deacon Campbell—goin to begin in the mornin, and there wont be no more trouble at our house.”

“Good! Good!” shouted Eleazer, until the blood tingled in his veins, and the hills echoed back the sound. “I’m warm enough now, and I guess I’d better go home. ’Taint very late, is it?” he added, looking up to the moon.

“No, it’s early yet. You’ll be home soon enough. Run along and tell your mother. Good night.”

“Good night:” and so they parted, just in time to escape the observation of a company



of young people, who wondered what was going on out in the woods.

"I'm in good season, aint I, mother?" said Eleazer, as he sprang into the kitchen, which served as a family sitting-room.

"Yes, very good," was the reply.

"You done pretty well," added the deacon. "All well where you've been?"

"Yes, sir; the boys had all gone to the temperance meetin."

"Did Mr. Grannis let his boys go to that meetin?"

"Yes, sir. He said they wouldn't get any hurt there as long as the minister goes. Uncle Lem went. I see him goin and comin, and he told me to tell you, mother, that he'd joined the society, and was goin to work for Deacon Campbell. He's goin to begin to-morrow mornin, and I'm awful glad of it. Uncle Lem's a real good man, and you'll see now that he wont always be so poor. Bashy Turner said he'd lay up money fast as anybody if he'd stop drinkin, and now he's stopped."



Deacon Flanders seemed busy with his account book, but the figures danced so before his eyes, that it was quite impossible for him to make any calculations. He did not scold, did not command his son to keep silence, or even frown a reproof. The younger children were in bed, and as Eleazer sat silently looking into the fire, seeing pictures which no one else could see, it was not strange that his parents should indulge in serious thoughts.

The deacon had no intention of yielding to the pressure of the influence he could not but feel. He would not retreat from the position he had at first taken upon the subject of temperance, yet he was ready to acknowledge that all had a right to their own opinion; and after carefully considering the matter, thought best to make no further opposition. So much he had said to Deacon Porter, proposing for himself a *neutral* rather than a "*middlin*" ground, as he had first announced.



## CHAPTER XIV.

## LUMBERING.



HE next morning Mrs. Weston rose very early, to prepare breakfast for her husband, although he assured her that it was not necessary. "You and the children will need what there is," he said, kindly.

"There'll be enough left for us," she answered with a smile which was almost bright. "We've got plenty, and I'm so happy. I don't want much to eat. I'll make some spider cakes for the children, so they'll have a treat."

"O, Sally, what a wretch I've been!" exclaimed Lemuel Weston. "When you promised to be my wife, you didn't expect to live in such a poor place as this, and I didn't expect it neither. But there's better days



comin. You shan't always live so, if I'm able to work. I shan't get home very early to-night. Good-by." He stooped to kiss his wife, adding, "Keep that to remember me by, and be as comfortable as you can."

She watched him as he started on his long walk, and then sat down by the fire to think of her happiness. For the last month she had rejoiced with trembling, now she felt assured of prosperity. She occupied herself with plans for improving the appearance of her home. She could not reset glass in broken windows, but she could conceal some of the cracks in the warped ceiling, and make the floor clean, so that her husband would note the change.

Thus she thought of him, while with each step he trod beneath the paling light of the stars, he seemed drawn more closely to the wife and children he had so long neglected. He was strong that morning, for he had lifted his heart to God in prayer, and all things were possible to him.



Deacon Campbell's family were sitting down to breakfast when he knocked at the door, and obeyed the summons to enter.

"There's a seat for you," said Mrs. Campbell, pointing to an empty chair. "We expected you."

"You've had a cold walk," remarked the deacon.

"Rather cold, though I didn't think much about it," was the reply. "I took breakfast before I come from home."

"No matter for that. You need more by this time. Sit down and eat with us, so we can start the day fair. You and I've got quite a job on hand. I've made up my mind to build a good sized barn next season. Horace is a pretty good joiner, and I want to build it while I'm sure of his help. Sit down and eat:" and thus urged, the newcomer seated himself at the table, where he proved that a long walk in a cold morning was a sufficient stimulant to the appetite.



Breakfast over, a chapter in the Bible was read, and prayer offered. Even then it was early, but each member of the household was ready for his or her allotted task.

"I don't see but what you'll have to go to mill, George," said his father. "Your mother thinks she can't spare two bushels of flour out of her chest, and I want to send as much as that over to Weston's to-night. I guess they're pretty short. Can't you manage it some way so to go without losing any lessons?"

"If I can go right off, I shant lose anything but reading."

"Then start. We'll get the chores done some way. Mother, you'll have a good dinner ready by twelve, wont you? A cold lunch wont be just the thing for us temperance folks."

"I'll remember you," said Mrs. Campbell, cheerfully. Then the three youngest children, too small to be counted in the working force of the family, shouted "Good-by," as their father went out of the house.



No one in Hardhack would ever have thought of calling Deacon Campbell a drunkard, yet he was certainly a very different man from what he had been, and his home was very different. It was the right place for Lemuel Weston, who had been treated in a way to put him on his very best behavior.

The oxen were yoked and ready for a start to the woods, when their owner appeared, whip in hand.

"There, that's somethin like. I've been lookin round for somebody to pull even with me in the wood-lot, and I guess I've hit on the right man. You didn't use to be afraid of work, Lem."

"I aint afraid of it now," was the reply. "I'm ready to do all I'm able to, and I used to be reckoned good for a day's work most anywhere."

"Well, we'll see what we can do," said the deacon. "Go long, Buck—Gee, Bill. Might as well ride," added their owner, himself standing on one of the cross-pieces of the



sled. "We had a good meetin last night, quite encouragin to the minister. Seen him lately, to have any talk with him?"

"No, I haint," answered Mr. Weston. "He called round the other day, but I was away to work. My wife was to home, and she was glad to see him. He's a good man, I guess; and I mean to go and hear him preach, when I can make things come round right:" which last remark was understood.

"I hope you'll go, Lem. We want to get out all the temperance folks we can, so if there comes a pull, bime-by, we can keep up our side."

"I aint much of a temperance man, yet," was answered. "I aint but just enlisted, and don't know how I shall hold out."

"You must hold out, Lem. 'Twont do to put your hand to the plough and look back. We want to show the opposers how much better 'tis to let liquor alone. They say we'll all give out when it comes to hard work, or bein out in the cold; but I've tried it so far,



this winter, and I haint give up yet.—Gee! Gee!—There, here we are! You take the trees I've marked on the right hand, and I'll keep to the left. We've got a good start this mornin, and we'll have somethin done before noon. My wife 'll blow the horn time enough for dinner at twelve."

Directly the ring of two axes told that those who wielded them were working with a will, needing nothing beyond severe exercise to send the blood leaping through their veins. With an occasional shout of encouragement or praise, the men toiled on until the horn sounded, when the trunk of a huge tree was rolled to its place on the sled.

"We've done a good mornin's work," said the deacon, looking around complacently. "I'll take this log over to the mill after dinner, and we'll have somethin of a start in our lumberin by Saturday night.—Go long! I've picked up a sharp appetite somewhere among the trees."

"Just in time," said Mrs. Campbell, when



her husband entered the kitchen. "Dinner's all ready to put on the table. I thought I calkerlated about right. Got along well with Lem?"

"Yes," was the decided answer. "If he keeps on as he's begun, he'll be the best hand I ever hired. He's worked like a trooper this mornin. You've got some hot coffee, and I'm glad of it. I guess we're both of us pretty dry."

The oxen were cared for, and Lem Weston came in, ready for the dinner, which he ate with a hearty relish and a thankful heart. Then back to the woods, where he proved himself no eye-servant. As the saw-mill was not far away, his employer was soon with him again, and the afternoon passed quickly.

"Enough for one day," exclaimed Deacon Campbell, when, in the growing darkness, he swung his axe wide of the mark. "George is going home with you, to carry some flour he got ground this mornin, and you can have



some pork and beef if you want it. How are you out for tea and sugar?"

"I guess there aint any in the house," was the reply. "I bought some week before last, but it must be all gone by this time."

"Well, I guess we can spare some. We made a good supply of sugar last year, and that makes me think—there's a good chance to make sugar in the woods back of your house, on the south side of the hill. Perhaps you would like to take it this year."

Lemuel Weston went home that night a happier man than he had been for many years. His children sprang to meet him, his wife smiled a welcome, and the old house itself seemed more pleasant. Wheat and rye flour, pork, beef, sugar and tea were brought in, George Campbell wondering at the delight manifested. After some delay, spent in disposing of these stores, bags and pails were returned to the sleigh, and Mr. Weston left alone with his family.

"I've got supper all ready for you," said



his wife, as soon as she was able to speak.

"I done the best I could."

"No doubt of it, Sally, but I've had supper. I don't need any more, but I'm sure you and the children do. Make a cake and we'll all sit down together. There's some butter, aint there?"

"Just a little," answered Abby, quickly. "Mother said we'd leave it for you, and so we had some molasses."

"So you thought of me, Sally, bad as I've been. Let's have an old-fashioned supper of hot cakes and maple sugar, and I guess we can all eat. Make a cup of tea, too. We'll have sort of a celebration. Come, children, let's get up in the corner out of the way;" and taking them both in his lap, they watched the preparations for supper. "Mother used to say we ought to thank God for every mercy, and this is a mercy, Sally. Let us thank him."

A few broken sentences were uttered as they sat around the table, and thus gratitude was expressed.



If Mr. Gibson could have looked in upon this group, he too would have thanked God and taken courage. But so important an event as Lemuel Weston's better provision for his family could not long remain a secret. Bashy Turner, who improved the first opportunity to call upon her friend, and learn all that had transpired, was glad to spread the good news.

"And you expect Lem's going to keep that up right along, do you?" asked one, who had no sympathy with "the radicals."

"Yes, I do expect it," was the frank reply.

"Then you've got to be terribly disappointed. When a man gets such a taste for liquor as he's got, it takes more than a paper promise to keep him from drinking."

"Then it's a dreadful bad taste to get, aint it?" retorted Bashy, with a gleam of triumph in her eyes. "There aint but one safe way, and that's to let it alone. That's the doctrine of the temperance folks, and I'm glad if you've got so you believe it."



"Bashy's a master-hand at talkin," remarked an old woman. "You'd better mind what you say, if you don't want her to corner you; and she's right about the liquor."

"Why, grandmother, you goin to turn against us?"

"I aint goin to turn against nobody," was the reply. "I'm only against liquor, and I always was, except for medicine, and helpin anybody along when they're tired. I've seen a good deal of drinkin in my day, and I'm glad there's somebody goin to put a stop to it. Bashy, you keep on preachin, and tell me all that's goin on."

Those who prophesied that Deacon Campbell would get "sick of his hired man," and those who said the hired man would get "sick of his work," were both alike mistaken; as were those who prophesied there would be trouble in the school of district number one.

Mr. Hudson had no idea of governing his scholars with blows or an assumption of un-



natural dignity. *Out* of school, he gave them proofs of his physical strength; *in* school, he proved his ability to govern by appealing to the best feelings of those under his care. Of course there were croakers in other districts where a different order of things prevailed. Nobody could manage a Hardhack school in that way; and then, moreover, the master was meddling with temperance, which he had no right to do. His scholars heard this, and resolved to stand by him in all things. If he wished them to sign the temperance pledge, they would do it; and the night he repeated his essay, the whole school, except the very youngest, was present. Silent and attentive, while he read and talked, he then gave them permission to enjoy themselves for an hour in their own way.

"I'm glad we got crowded out last night," said Jim Cragin, to the group of boys around him. "We've had a good deal better time, and I guess the master has too."

At the end of an hour, a tap of the ruler



enjoined silence, when Mr. Hudson told them he had a temperance song he would like to have them learn. "I have but one copy, but you can take copies from it, and as the tune is a familiar one, I think we can be ready to sing it at the next temperance meeting. I will read it to you;" and having done so, he asked how many would like to copy it.

Every hand was raised; those who could write, and those who could not, being equally anxious to obtain it. Copies were multiplied, and the song, one of George Hudson's own composition, became very popular. The chorus was shouted at all times and seasons. At the next temperance meeting it was sung twice, the second time by request, and did much to increase the general enthusiasm. People could keep their children at home, but they could not prevent their learning this song, and everybody knows what power there is in song.

Another, set to the tune of Yankee Doodle, followed; and this, full of satire and question,



was even more effective than the first. "Sung whenever there was room," as Jim Cragin said, there was not a family in Hardhack who did not hear at least the chorus. The disaffected deacons might frown and shake their heads, yet still the refrain rang out clear and distinct, the singers declaring it to be their duty thus to preach temperance.

So the good cause progressed, its friends growing more hopeful, and its enemies more bitter in their opposition. As the winter advanced, and the teetotalers endured both cold and fatigue even better than when they depended upon the fleeting warmth and strength induced by stimulants, their experience was quoted to prove that alcoholic liquor was by no means one of the necessities of life.

The first reformers, most of whom had been moderate drinkers, both in words and deeds settled the one great question, underlying all others, in the temperance movement. They made use of stimulants under the most



favorable circumstances; when, if ever, brain and body would withstand all deleterious influences. But even then, physical strength was weakened by the use of intoxicating liquors, intellect debased, and moral sensibilities blunted. *Then, as now*, there was danger of that state, when all obligations forgotten, a deadly appetite holds sway over heart and head.


It is *not* true that moderate drinking *was then, or is now*, conducive to health and happiness; neither is it true, as many affirm, that there are more drunkards now in our land in proportion to the number of inhabitants, than there were when attention was first called to the evils of intemperance.





## CHAPTER XV.

## A COLD WATER RAISING.

“ RAISING without any rum! Who ever heard of such a thing!” Certainly no one in Hardhack. It had been proved that corn could be husked, trees felled, and all common labor performed without this accompaniment, but to raise the heavy timbers of a large barn was quite a different affair.

“If Deacon Campbell thinks his barn’s goin up without liquor, he’ll find himself mistaken,” said one and another. Nate Barnes swore a terrible oath that it never *should* go up without liquor. Sam Buffy repeated the oath, and there were many who encouraged them. Some church members were more than willing the deacon should be taught a lesson, and after all the efforts which had



been made, the number of able-bodied men in the temperance ranks was comparatively small.

But they were "made of good stuff," as Lem Weston said, and the barn was sure to go up. "Needn't anybody be scart;" and judging from the appearance of those most interested in the work, no one felt any fears.

Of course everybody was invited, and there was a general turn out, some going from one motive, and some from another. George Ransom, who knew every pin and mortice in a frame, as well as a sailor knows the ropes of his ship, superintended the work. A bright afternoon in early June, all was in readiness.

"Every man to his place," shouted the foreman. "We don't want to make a long job of this. Now! All together!"

But as the broadside was lifted, it was observed that four men threw their whole weight upon it, and consequently it was allowed to settle back.



George Ransom, quick to decide, shouted again, "Now! All together! Heave her up! Give the men a ride, if they want it!"

Only two attempted the ride, and of these, Sam Buffy, yielding to the force of gravity, dropped when a few feet from the ground. Nate Barnes, with more persistency, allowed himself to be carried up about fifteen feet, when some one exclaiming, "Look out! We shant stop for you!" he too dropped, at the risk of life and limb.

No more boasting from him or his companion that afternoon. They slunk away to a pile of boards where they would be partially screened from observation, and chewed tobacco as a slight solace for their pain and disgrace. No sympathy was wasted upon them. The boys present were especially delighted with their downfall, and when the frame of the barn stood complete, Jim Cragin invited them to come out of their hiding-place, and see if everything was all right.

"Mind your own business, Jim," was Nate's



reply. "We haint nothin to do with this raisin, and don't want to have."

"But you had a ride all for nothin, and you ought to care."

Having said this, Jim thought it best to retreat, although he took good care to enlist others in their behalf. Lem Weston, who really hoped they had learned a lesson, asked them in a pleasant tone, if they didn't begin to believe in cold water.

"There never was a heavier frame put up in town, and there never was one went up any easier," said Lem, by way of comment. "I never see the time when I could lift as much as I can now."

"Who cares what you can do?" growled Nate. "I don't want to hear none of your temperance stuff, and what's more, I wont. If you've got any work on hand, you'd better be about it. You aint wanted here."

"Well, I guess I aint," was the good-natured reply.

A stranger could have told to which party



any one of the men present belonged. The discomfiture written upon some faces, and the triumph upon others, were easily read. Deacon Campbell received many congratulations, while he thanked his neighbors and friends for their assistance.

One blast of the horn announced that supper was ready, and all were invited to enter the house. Looking around, to see that no one remained outside, except the boys, who were to wait until their elders were served, the deacon observed that Nate Barnes and Sam Buffy were missing, and sent his son to call them.

"I don't want none of your supper," growled Nate. "It's the meanest raisin I ever went to, and I don't want nothin to do with it."

"Well, you've a right to your opinion," replied Horace, pleasantly. "But if you want a good supper, you'd better come into the house."

Sam Buffy looked up, as though a good



supper was quite a temptation. "Come along," he said to his companion. "Let's see the thing through."

"No, I *wont*," was the reply; and if Nate had added, "I can't," he could hardly have been accused of telling a falsehood.

Sam, who was able to walk without limping, decided to eat some supper, and make the best of a bad bargain. Going into the kitchen, one shouted, "You've given us such a lift this afternoon, you're entitled to double rations;" when he answered, with a sorry laugh, "I haint done no hurt, have I?"

"Not a bit, unless you've hurt yourself," replied his host. "We expect to have you in our society before long, and then we'll all pull together."

There had been both baking and brewing to prepare for this feast, and mugs of foaming beer were drained, one after another, until the demand would have exhausted any ordinary supply. But this house was equal to the emergency; and although Bashy Turner



said she "never see folks eat so, in all the born days of her life," enough remained for the boys; and even when they were satisfied, Mrs. Campbell's store was not quite exhausted.

When the company began to disperse, search was made for Nate Barnes, and he not being found, his brother sot guessed he'd crawled off towards home. "He'll go through the woods, and 'taint a great ways."

This was true, and the poor man, taking advantage of the absence of those whom he considered his tormentors, made off to the woods, where he was seen by some boys, who reported him as moving very slowly. The afternoon had been anything but pleasant to him, and while he cursed his own folly, he cursed the temperance deacon still more heartily. "Grandsir Nichols" might possibly condole with him, but most people would consider his fall a good joke.

This raising had been a matter of so much interest, that all who remained away were



anxious to hear how it was carried through. Deacon Porter drove up to his own door, looking surly and disappointed. Deacon Willey said nothing until his wife asked him some questions. Deacon Flanders admitted that there was no trouble; but Deacon Cragin and his boys made the hills echo with "Yankee Doodle Temperance," as Jim called their favorite song.

There was no denying that the frame was up, strong and substantial, and there was every prospect that Deacon Campbell's barn would be in readiness to receive the luxuriant crop of grass, which even now waved in the breeze. Ezra Nichols was jubilant, notwithstanding his father's complaints.

"Things is all goin wrong in these last days," said the old man. "Scriptur's set aside, and children turn against their fathers. I've lived till I'm a burden. O, dear!" The speaker looked like one of the army Jim had seen in his dreams, and this greatly detracted from the dignity of his speech.



"I think you are made comfortable," was the reply of his son. "If these are the last days, they are better than the first. Everything went on like clock-work this afternoon. Nobody got drunk, and nobody got hurt, except Nate Barnes, and he deserved it. I hope he's learned a lesson, and for my part, I wish there couldn't be a drop of liquor bought in the country:" which remark was heard with a groan.

It would require a large volume to contain the comments upon this afternoon's work. Bashy Turner thought the trouble was most over, and started for home in a frame of mind which any one might envy. A boy, with her feelings, would have shouted, sung, and whistled; but she, a middle-aged woman, walked on silently, thanking God for what she had seen, and praying that she might be permitted to aid in spreading the new gospel of temperance. Suddenly, as she was passing through some woods, a man sprang into the road, and called her by



name. Startled, she did not speak until her name was repeated, with the question, "Have you forgot Ben Welcome?"

"Why, Ben, is that you? Where did you come from? When did you get home?"

"I haint been home," was the whispered reply.

"Haint been home!" repeated Bashy. "What do you mean?"

"Mean what I say," answered Ben, in the same subdued tone. "I don't dare to go home."

"What's the reason? What's the matter?" And then remembering what reports had been circulated in regard to this young man, she asked, "Have you got into any trouble?"

"Yes, and I want you to help me out. Will you?"

"If I can," replied the woman. "Come home with me. There aint nobody there. Mrs. Priest went away yesterday mornin, to be gone till next week. We can talk better in the house."



"Are you sure there wont anybody come? I wouldn't have anybody else see me for a thousand dollars."

"Well, you wont see nobody there. Come right along with me."

"No," he replied, after a moment's hesitation. "I'll keep in the woods, and come up to your kitchen door after you get home. But you wont tell anybody that you've seen me."

"No, Ben, you can trust me;" and she hastened on to the house, where she was soon joined by her companion. "Now sit right down, and tell me what I can do for you," she said.

"First give me something to eat. I'm half starved."

"Half starved!" repeated Bashy, in an absent way. "You half starved? Well, I've got enough for you to eat, and I'll make a cup of tea, soon as I can get some water hot."

"No, I don't want that, but if you've got some brandy—"



“Got some brandy, Ben Welcome! I wouldn't have a drop of the pizen stuff on my premises. If you'd never seen any liquor, you wouldn't got into trouble. If you want me to help you, you must do as I say, and I say you'll drink a cup of tea.”

“Well,” responded the young man submissively, commencing to eat the food placed before him.

“Perhaps you'd better go into the other room,” said his hostess. “'Taint no ways likely there will anybody come here to-night, but we might as well be on the safe side. I'll draw the lower shutters, and then there'll be moonlight enough to see to eat by. I'm goin to make some tea.”

She closed the door between them, and proceeded to kindle a fire; meanwhile considering what was best to be done for Ben. That he had committed some crime, she did not doubt. When she looked in upon him, he was still eating hungrily.

“I don't know but I shall eat you out of



house and home," he said, with an attempt to smile. "But I haint tasted anything before for two days. I didn't expect to come to this."

"Liquor's brought you to it," replied Bashy, bluntly. "It's at the bottom of most all trouble I ever see, and we're tryin to turn over a new leaf here. You drink that tea, and then I'll hear your story."

"Well, you'll help me, wont you?" said the young man, looking up to her with tearful eyes. "Don't turn me out."

"I'll do all I can for you. There can't nobody say Bashy Turner ever refused to help a fellow creetur, when she could. You drink that bowl of tea, while I cover up the fire."

He obeyed, but his craving for a more potent stimulant was not satisfied. Brandy would have given him temporary relief, and had it been within his reach, he would have drank to intoxication.

"Now tell me what you want me to do,"



said his hostess, seating herself opposite him. "You can tell me anything you want to, and there wont nobody be no wiser for it."

"I've got into trouble," was the reply. "When I went away from home, I didn't mean to do as I have, but I got into bad company. I drank too much and spent a good deal of money. You don't want to know all the wicked things I done, but the last thing I did, was to pass counterfeit money, and the officers are after me. I didn't mean to come back so, but I couldn't go anywhere else, and I wanted to see my mother." Here the young man's composure gave way, and he wept like a child. "I don't know as father'd speak to me. I've been in the woods two days. Last night I came close up to the house, but I didn't dare to speak. What made me think of coming to you was because you told me a good many years ago, if I ever got into trouble, you'd help me."

"I remember it, Ben. You helped father home when he couldn't help himself. He'd



died in the gutter if it hadn't been for you. What do you want me to do?"

"Go and tell father I'm here, and ask him what I shall do. If I had money I could go out West, out of the way; though I'd be glad to stay with mother till I feel better."

"Be you sick?" asked his friend.

"I aint very well," was the reply. "There's somethin the matter with my side, and when I walk fast I almost lose my breath. Hark! Aint there somebody comin?"

"No," answered Bashy. "It's only the old elm sweeping against the house. I've meant to have that branch cut off, but it don't get done."

After this they talked for a long time, Ben growing more communicative, and Bashy more compassionate.

"I see just how 'tis," she said at length. "You didn't mean to do nothin criminal, but liquor and bad company got the better of you."

"That's the truth, Bashy;" and this admis-



sion was both prefaced and supplemented with a sigh. "I learned to drink at home, and it's been a bad thing for me."

"So it has, and it's been a bad thing for a good many others. Now, if you'll promise not to taste of liquor for a month, I'll go over and see your father in the mornin. It's your last chance, Ben. You've most finished yourself up, soul and body, and you'll get through with this world pretty quick if you don't do different."

"I'll promise to let liquor alone for a whole month," he answered. "But father drinks."

"Not much now, I guess," said Bashy. "He's pretty nigh come round to the temperance folks, and I guess seein you 'll finish him up. Your father's felt bad about you, I know that, though he aint a man to say much."

"I know I've made him a good deal of trouble, but I've made myself the most. Nobody knows what I've suffered within a



week. I'd rather die than go through it again."

"It's a solemn thing to die, Ben."

"I know it, but we've all got to die once, and it's dreadful to feel as though you were hunted. I couldn't sleep anywhere."

"Poor boy! I'm sorry for you," said Bashy, pityingly. "You can go to bed up stairs to-night, and sleep all night. There wont nobody think of lookin here for you. 'Taint a very nice place up stairs, but there's a good bed, and you'll be safe. Perhaps you'd better not come down in the mornin till I call you. I've promised to do some sewin for your mother before long, and may be I'll go over pretty early and see about it. The neighbors are used to seein me out early and late, and there wont nobody think strange. You go right up stairs, and I'll fix things down here."

"O, Bashy, I thank you a thousand times," cried the young man, sobbing. "I come to the right place, and if you'll help me out



of this trouble, I'll never get into any more. I'll do right the rest of my life."

"That means you'll be a Christian, Ben. Did you think of that?"

"No, I didn't," he answered, looking at her earnestly. "I meant I'd give up drinking, and go to work."

"Well, I guess you'll need religion to help you do that. I haint got so much as I ought to have, but it's worth everything to me. It helps me all the time. I know your mother learnt you to say your prayers when you was a boy, and if you're in earnest about doin right, you'll pray to-night before you go to sleep."

"I will," he replied. "O, if I'd done as my mother told me, I should been well and happy now. It seems to me I'd be willing to die if I could see her, and she would forgive me."

"I guess you'll see her in the mornin'," said his friend. "Go up stairs now;" and Bashy held the door open, for him to pass through.



“Turn to the left when you get up, and don't worry about any thing.”

She closed the door after him, when, in answer to a question, he told her he was “all right.” Then she drew the table back to its place before the door, and sat down to think. Her prayer for an opportunity to do good had been answered in a way she least expected, and she looked to God for wisdom and guidance.





## CHAPTER XVI.

## AN UNEXPECTED GUEST.



THROUGH the woods, it was not more than a mile to Mr. Welcome's. Bashy Turner wondered if she could keep the right course by moonlight. She could not sleep, that was impossible ; and if officers were really in search of Ben, there was no time to be lost in providing for his safety. "I'll go right along," she said to herself. "It's strange if I can't keep the track." Then she remembered that by crossing a stream upon the trunk of a tree, she could keep in the open field most of the way. Making some changes in her dress, she went out, and after looking around to be sure that no one was near, she started on her walk. The hooting of owls, the babbling of the brook, and the sighing of the night-wind,



were the only sounds she heard, and before she had decided how to make known her errand, she had reached the house she sought.

There she stood, irresolute, until a woman's face appeared at the window. "Mrs. Welcome!" she called in a low voice.

"Who is it?" was the reply.

"Bashy Turner; and I've somethin to say to you, but I don't want anybody to know I'm here, except you and your husband."

"Then wait a minute, and I'll open the north door," said Mrs. Welcome. This was done noiselessly, and the visitor entered a room seldom used. "What's the matter?" asked her hostess. "Have you heard any thing from my boy?"

"Yes, I see him not more than an hour ago," was the whispered response.

"Where? Where? Where is he?" asked the mother.

"There, Mrs. Welcome, don't take on so," said her companion, kindly; "I didn't mean to



be so blunt, but it come right out. I meant to tell your husband first. Ben is safe in the bed up stairs in my house, and I don't doubt but he's fast asleep."

"But why didn't he come home? Tell me all about it. I can bear it. I've been thinking about Ben most all the time for two or three days, and to-night I couldn't sleep. It seemed as though he'd got into trouble. Has he?"

"Yes, Mrs. Welcome, he has; but it's trouble money can help him out of. Leastways, I think it can."

"Then he shall be helped, if it takes all we've got. But what is it that he's done, Bashy?"

"Passed counterfeit money," was the reply. "He's been hidin in the woods two days. He called to me when I was goin home from Deacon Campbell's, and I told him to come right to my house. He eat some supper and went to bed. Then I concluded the sooner I came over here, the better. I pro-



mised Ben I'd see his father, and 'twasn't best to wait."

Mrs. Welcome wept unrestrainedly, now that she knew her son was a criminal. But she was not one to yield weakly to emotion, when action was necessary, and soon recovering herself, she went to tell her husband the sad news.

"Thank God it's no worse," was the father's first ejaculation, after being made to comprehend the true state of affairs. "I'll go in and see Bashy. There aint many would done as she has, and she shant lose anything by this night's work." Mr. Welcome grasped the hand of her who had come to do him such service, and thanked her in broken accents, adding, "Tell me all you know about my poor boy. Don't keep back anything;" and Bashy repeated what she had already said to the mother.

"How does he seem? Is he penitent?" asked his father anxiously, after this. "Will he do any better in future?"



"He means to," was the reply. "He says he'll let liquor alone, and try to do right."

"How has he lived—in the woods? Why didn't he come home?"

These, and many other questions were asked in such rapid succession, that it was impossible to reply to them all; but enough was told to decide Mr. Welcome in regard to his own conduct.

"There must be something done, right away," he said. "Ben must be saved from punishment if money will save him;" and the father bowed his head for very shame, that it was *his* son who deserved punishment at the hands of the law. "I must see my boy before morning," he added soon after, in a hoarse voice. "Are you going home to-night, Bashy?"

"Yes; I meant to go right back as soon as I told you. Ben didn't know I was comin till mornin, and I don't feel quite easy to leave him there alone. I guess I'd better go now."



"I'll go with you; and wife, I'll be back before light. Don't worry. I'll save Ben."

It was very hard for Mrs. Welcome to remain at home when her son was so near, but she did so without a murmur. Bashy Turner led the way through the woods, and after reaching home, went herself to apprise Ben of his father's coming.

"Father come?" he repeated. "What is he going to do with me?"

This question was hardly asked, when Mr. Welcome groped his way up the narrow stairs, and father and son were left alone. The returned wanderer made a frank and full confession of his guilt, extenuating nothing, and throwing himself upon his father's mercy.

"I'll do all I can for you, my son, upon one condition."

"Name it, father," cried the young man. "I'll do any thing you say."

"Drink no more liquor—not a drop while you live, sick or well."

"I promise," was the quick response.



"Then raise your right hand, and repeat what I say." This too was done, and the solemn "So help me, God," sealed the pledge. "I'll go now," said Mr. Welcome. "I'll see what I can do for you, and I guess you'd better stay here for the present. Your mother will make some excuse for coming over to-morrow, and likely I'll come with her."

There was a short consultation in the room below, and the father left, to return to his home. Then Bashy Turner began to realize that she needed rest. But morning was at hand. She called to her guest. Breakfast was prepared and eaten as they talked, and Ben then returned to the chamber. His hostess lay down and attempted to sleep, but in this she did not succeed. So much was at stake, so much, perhaps, depended upon her discretion, that she started at every sound.

At length a loud rap summoned her to the door, where she found a man who wished her to go and help his wife for a few days.



"I can't go any where this week," she answered decidedly. "I'm pretty nigh tired out any way, and I'm expectin Mrs. Welcome this mornin, to come over with some sewin. 'Taint no use talkin," she added; "I can't run every minute. I must have some time to rest."

"But what am I goin to do? If Mrs. Welcome's willin to wait—"

"If she's willin to wait, I'll stay to home and read my Bible a spell," interrupted Bashy, a little impatiently. "I guess 'twould do me good."

That visitor was despatched, and she hoped no more would come. But there seemed to be a general demand for her services that morning, and before Mrs. Welcome's arrival, three others had urged her to go with them.

"I'm glad you've come," she said to this lady, in the presence of a man who had been most importunate. "Folks can see for themselves that I've got company, and must stay to home."



"I hope so, as I've come to stay all day," was the reply.

"Yes," added Mr. Welcome. "She's been low-spirited lately, and I guess you'd be a good hand to cheer her up. I want her to stay all day."

"And I do much want to have her," responded Bashy, understanding well the arrangement. "I'll do all my best to cheer her up a little."

"As long as I come visiting without an invitation, I thought I'd bring along something," said the visitor. "Perhaps my husband will be here to supper. He's goin off on business, and don't know when he'll get back."

"I should like that. But wont he come in now?" asked the mistress of this humble home.

"I can't stop this morning," was the answer. "There's some business out West to be attended to before long, and Mr. Whitney or I may have to go out there. He knows more



about it than I do, and if he thinks best, one of us may start right off."

"About that land you bought together a few years ago," remarked he who waited, seeming unwilling to leave, and Mr. Welcome bowing, drove off.

Mrs. Welcome, too much excited to listen to a prolonged conversation, had already entered the house, and so soon as she and Bashy were left alone, she went up into the low chamber to meet her son. Here, through all the morning hours, they wept or talked together. Like a child, the young man knelt at her feet, while she smoothed back the hair from his pale brow, and sighed, as she noted his sunken cheeks. Freely she forgave him for all the suffering he had caused her. But he had sinned against love greater than hers, and of this she reminded him.

"If you had been a Christian, you could have resisted temptation," she said.

"It wouldn't have made any difference what I was, as long as I kept on drinking,"



replied Ben. "Liquor would have drowned out my religion just as it does other people's. I know I ought to be a Christian, but I must give up drinking first. When a man's drunk, it don't make much difference whether he's a Christian or not. I've seen enough of the world to know that."

Bashy sat at a window from which she could see a long distance, ready at any moment to summon Mrs. Welcome, if intrusion threatened. No one appearing, she did not come down until preparations for dinner were commenced, when she offered her assistance.

"I don't need no help, and there was no need of your bringin them victuals," replied her hostess. "I've got enough in the house for us all to eat."

"I don't doubt it. But I wanted to bring something, and I thought you wouldn't be affronted."

"Law, no, Mrs. Welcome. You can do just as you're a mind to. Ben 'll think more



of your cookin than he does of mine, and I guess he might come down and eat with us."

Ben, however, did not think best to do this, and his mother ate with him in a place of safety. The afternoon seemed long, all waiting so impatiently for Mr. Welcome's return. At the old-fashioned, early hour for tea, he appeared, looking serious but hopeful.

"I've done what I could," he said in answer to his wife's questions. "Mr. Whitney has gone, and I told him not to spare in spending money. He thinks it likely somebody'll be looking after Ben about home, and we shall have to leave him here for a while."

"Yes," rejoined Bashy. "That's just what you ought to do. He can stay, without anybody knowin it, till Mrs. Priest comes back; and 'twouldn't be none strange if she was gone a month. I've just thought of another thing too. If you want to put folks on the wrong track, you'd best take your wife and go a journey to see some of her folks. I'll look out for Ben while you're gone."



"I can't go away," sobbed the mother, overwhelmed at the thought of being again separated from her son. "He needs to be nursed up and got well."

"Bashy can do that," responded Mr. Welcome. "Can't you trust her, after all she has done? We must do what's best for Ben. The journey is just the thing. We'll start to-morrow. You've been wanting to see your sister, and now's the time to go. I'll go up and talk with Ben for a little while before supper."

The young man was so grateful for the kindness of his father, that he frequently interrupted the account of what had been done, with thanks and protestations of amendment. At first mention of the journey, he objected, but a little consideration convinced him that it was wise. Then came the parting, neither knowing when or where they should meet again. It might be in a pleasant home, or it might be in a felon's cell.



## CHAPTER XVII.

## A SECRET REVEALED.



Y the next morning it was generally known that Mr. Whitney had started for the West. At least this was the belief, and no one saw reason to doubt that his business was to look after some land belonging to himself and Mr. Welcome. Close upon this followed the news that the latter named gentleman had left home with his wife to visit some of her relations. They did not go too soon. Just at nightfall, a stranger stopped at "the tavern" in Hardhack, and after giving directions for the care of his horse, and ordering supper, he engaged the landlord in conversation. Descanting upon the beauties of the surrounding country and praising the farms, he remarked, "There must be some rich men in town?"



"Some that's pretty forehanded," was the reply. "Mr. Welcome's the richest man we have got amongst us."

"Where does he live?" asked the stranger, with apparent carelessness.

"Down there in the valley," answered the landlord, pointing to a large brick house about half a mile distant.

"He must have quite a family, to need such a house as that."

"He's got a wife and four children. But the children are all married except one, and he may be, for all anybody knows to the contrary. He's the youngest of the family, and he's made his father a good deal of trouble," continued the garrulous man, glad to find an appreciative listener in the stranger. "There don't nobody round here know where he is."

"His father must know," remarked the stranger. "Fathers generally keep track of their boys."

"Guess Mr. Welcome don't keep track of



Ben. He haint been to home since two years ago last Thanksgivin."

After supper the traveller again led his host to speak of Mr. Welcome's family, asking several questions. "You say there don't any body know where the youngest son is," he remarked at length. "Don't you ever hear anything about him?"

"There's been some stories round lately, but there aint much foundation for them, I guess. There's some talk about his passing counterfeit money."

"There's a good deal of that done," was the reply.

"Yes, I suppose there is, though we don't know much about it here in Hardhack, and I hope it aint true about Ben Welcome. He was a promising boy. The only trouble with him was, that he liked liquor too well. He was always ready to do anybody a good turn, and we all thought he was going to marry one of our best girls, and settle down with the old folks."



The officer of justice, for such he really was, having heard enough, made an excuse for leaving his companion, by saying that he wished to look round a little, and walked rapidly down the road to the brick house which had been pointed out to him. Here he asked, in a natural way, if Mr. Benjamin Welcome was at home.

"No, sir," replied the girl, who met him at the door.

"I expected to find him here," was then said, with apparent sincerity. "I have some business with him. Can you tell me where he is?"

"No, sir; I don't know."

"Then you haven't seen him lately?"

"No, sir."

"Is his father about home?"

"No, sir. Mr. Welcome went away this morning with his wife."

This catechising was continued until the stranger was satisfied that the girl had told him the truth. He also judged that no



person could be concealed in the house without her knowledge. Moreover, the fact that Mr. and Mrs. Welcome had left home that morning, he considered sufficient evidence that their son was nowhere in the vicinity.

Completely blinded by what he had seen and heard, he returned to "the tavern," where he was soon joined by one who had been deputed to assist him in the arrest of Benjamin Welcome. They consulted together, and thinking best to make a bold strike, told the landlord their business, promising him a reward for any information he might give.

"If you'd give me a thousand dollars, I couldn't tell you any more than I have," he replied, with dilated eyes. "Ben Welcome haint been to home since two years ago last Thanksgiving. It's my opinion he'd know better than to come here, if he'd got into trouble. He'd know he'd be looked after here."



"He might be round here somewhere in the woods," suggested one of the men.

"He wouldn't stay in the woods long, without something to eat," was the reply. "He'd go home for that, and 'taint no ways likely his father and mother'd go away if he was here. I wouldn't be afraid to bet a hundred dollars he aint nowhere in these parts;" and the officers were so far of this opinion, that they left town without making any search for the criminal.

Bashy Turner heard of their visit, and congratulated herself upon having thought of the journey for Mr. and Mrs. Welcome, while not a person came to her house without being entertained with complaints. She had worked till she was all tired out, and she wasn't goin away from home till she got rested. Folks might say just what they was a mind to. She could live without work a spell.

But this she was not allowed to do. If she would not go to the work, work was



carried to her. As she afterwards said, she sewed and prayed from morning till night, her secret unsuspected, and her guest undiscovered.

Ben Welcome, shut up to her society, told her much of his past history, revealing many things of which she had not before dreamed.

"Didn't I hear Pheny Whitney's voice down stairs?" he asked, one evening.

"She's been here," was the reply. "I should kept her longer, if it hadn't been for your supper. I thought you'd want it. We talked about you."

"What did she say about me?"

"She said she couldn't believe you was as bad as folks say. You and she used to be good friends, Ben. Some folks thought you meant to be married some time."

"Perhaps we should, if it hadn't been for liquor," said the young man, frankly. "That is what came between us. I loved Pheny Whitney, and I love her now. I wish I could see her long enough to tell her that; and



tell her too, that I mean to do different. I don't suppose she cares anything about me now, but she did once, and she's a good girl. I wonder somebody hasn't made a wife of her before now."

"There's been enough would be glad to," replied Bashy; "but she wont have nothin to say to anybody that way. Her cousin kept school in their district last winter, and folks thought they'd make a match. But she told me awhile ago there wasn't no such thing, and I'm sure I don't see nothin how her father could spare her. There aint a better housekeeper in town, and her brothers look up to her as though she was their mother. I guess too, she's done as much for temperance as anybody in Hardhack, and she hates tobacker most as bad as she does liquor."

"I knew that a good while ago," said Ben. "The last time I saw her, she told me she'd never marry a man who used tobacco or liquor, and I don't blame her.



I didn't then either, though I was mad, and said a good many things I've been ashamed of since. I wish I could see her."

"I'll tell her you're here, if you want I should. She's goin by here to-morrow, and I can speak to her to come in."

"I don't know as 'twould be best," was the reply.

"Do you think she'd go and tell you was here?" exclaimed Bashy, in quite an indignant tone.

"No, I don't think she would," answered the young man quickly, while his companion expressed herself more strongly.

"I *know* she wouldn't. She can keep a secret long's anybody. Seems to me she *has* kept one a good while, and nobody haint been none the wiser for it. I'd trust her far as I would myself; and that's enough."

"So 'tis, Bashy. I'll think about it. I aint afraid to trust her, but—" and pausing abruptly, the speaker went up to his room.

He could not remember when he had not



loved Pheny Whitney. Dissipation had for a time obscured this love, but it now pervaded his whole being, and he longed to give it expression. She *might* not, probably *would* not reciprocate his love, but it would be something to know she had not quite forgotten the old days. He *must* see her. He *would* see her, if she would grant him the privilege.

The next day, as Pheny was passing, her friend called to her, and scarcely was she in the house when she learned *why* she had been called.

"Ben here!" she cried in a husky voice. "Ben Welcome here!—A criminal! It aint best we should meet. But tell him I'm sorry for him, and will keep his secret. It's about him father's gone away. I understand it now, and I hope he'll be cleared. But I can't see him."

"Shall I tell him so?" asked Bashy, her own eyes filling with tears. "Be you sure you know your own mind?"

"Yes, yes," was the reply. "I ought to.



I've thought enough about him—too much, unless he's a better man."

"But he's goin to be a better man, Pheny. I heard him prayin last night, and you might help him if you was a mind to."

"Bashy! Bashy! You don't understand this. You mean well, but I can't see Ben Welcome. Tell him I pray for him, and that's all I can do. Good-by."

Saying this, Pheny Whitney rushed from the house, leaving her friend sadly perplexed. Bashy was little skilled in love matters, but she could see that the end had not yet come.

"Why couldn't the girl see him?" she said to herself. "'Twouldn't done no hurt;" and much in the same way "the girl" reasoned, as she walked on without once looking back.

And Ben, poor fellow! He could illy brook this disappointment, although he acknowledged that Pheny had done right, declaring that he was not fit to be in the same house with her. "If she prays for me, it's more than I ought to expect. But I should like to write



a few lines to her, if you'll let me have some paper. I want to ask her forgiveness, and tell her—"

Here he broke down utterly, and what he would have said, Bashy could only guess, as she went to bring a sheet of paper. The letter was written, sealed and directed, but there was no opportunity to deliver it. The young lady to whom it was addressed did not pass that way on her return home.

"I don't know nothin what to make of it," mused her friend. "She'd have to go a good ways round not to come by here. And there's Ben wouldn't eat no supper, and lookin like a ghost, when he'd begun to gain every day. But there—I guess the girl's right. I wouldn't trust none of these men, till they'd proved their words by their actions. The best of them aint none too good, and Ben haint proved himself as he ought to. I guess Pheny knows what's what."

A week went by, during the last days of which the whole town was in a state of great



excitement in regard to Ben Welcome. He was not the first son of Hardhack who had committed a crime, but his father's position and his own personal popularity gave a peculiar interest to everything connected with him. People said it was a terrible thing, and wondered how he could have fallen so low; while the advocates of total abstinence quoted his example as a warning to all other young men. Everybody talked of it, from Betty Glines to Eleazer Flanders, the latter expressing his opinion with much earnestness, and hoping folks would get their eyes open pretty soon. "Ben would be just as good as anybody, if he was a temperance man."

"Leazer!" called his father sternly. "All the temperance in the world wouldn't make him a Christian."

"Mr. Gibson says 'twould go a good ways towards making him one," replied the boy, quoting his minister's words with great assurance. "There are men here in Hardhack that need temperance after they've got re-



ligion, before they'll do as they ought to. Deacon Campbell said so in the store yesterday, and he ought to know."

"You've said enough, Leazer!" exclaimed the obstinate deacon. "I don't want to hear no more such talk. You'd better keep away from the store. 'Taint no place for boys."

Eleazer left the room, when his mother said: "I'm afraid you aint takin the right way to manage that boy. He's old enough to know what's goin on, and think about it. He's got his head full of temperance, and you hadn't ought to try to get it out. 'Twould kill me if he should do as Ben Welcome has, and there don't anybody deny but what it's all come of liquor."





## CHAPTER XVIII.

## DELIVERANCE.



PERHAPS I should have made mention ere this, of the donation visit at which Mr. Gibson received the ten dollars fairly earned for him by Messrs. Ransom, Nichols, and Whitney. Mr. Runnels and Mr. Smith paid this cheerfully, the former having already become a member of the temperance society, and the latter almost persuaded to follow his example.

Despite the coldness with which some of the leading members of the church regarded their minister, never had there been so many substantial gifts left at the parsonage on any similar occasion. The young people, especially, vied with each other in manifesting their esteem and affection.

Mr. Gibson was much gratified, yet he



could not be unmindful of those who absented themselves without sending a token of regret or regard. There had been no concerted action on the part of the anti-temperance men, as was threatened. Deacon Campbell said there had been less opposition than he expected; while others thought there was every reason to be encouraged. To save Lem Weston, if no other good had been accomplished, was worth all the effort which had been made.

His mother rejoiced at the wondrous transformation in his habits; and just here was the argument which Deacon Flanders found it most difficult to resist, although he persisted in saying that there was no need of going to extremes either way. As for the boys, who shouted the praises of cold water, and considered themselves members of the temperance society, he ridiculed the idea of their understanding to what they had pledged themselves. Even Sam Glines, who had worked for Mr. Welcome all the summer,



"steady as a man," could not realize the significance of what he had done.

It was easy to say this, yet it would have been very difficult to prove it. Sam was a strong, active boy, ready to do his duty, and happy in relieving his mother of any burden. He earned but little more than his board, but this little, judiciously expended, seemed doubled. His employer encouraged him with kind words and an occasional present, the family acknowledged his usefulness, and every thing went well with him.

Of course he could not fail to hear of the search for Ben Welcome, and the crime of which the young man was accused. As it chanced, or, to speak more truly, as Providence directed, Mr. Welcome had only temperance men in his employ, so there was no attempt to conceal the fact that strong drink had been the inciter of crime.

"Ben was a good-hearted boy," said one. "He was smart too, and if it hadn't been for liquor, he wouldn't got into trouble.



For my part, I hope he'll go clear and do better. 'Twill most kill his mother when she hears what he's done."

Mr. and Mrs. Welcome were absent from home one week. On their return, they passed the house of Bashy Turner, making an excuse for so doing, by calling for some work.

"'Taint done," said Bashy, in answer to an inquiry. "I thought you wasn't in no great hurry, and other folks was. But I want you to come in and tell me how you want some of it done. I'm afraid I shan't suit you if you don't."

This was said for the benefit of some one who stopped to speak with Mr. Welcome; and hardly had his wife entered the house, when he thought he would go in and get a drink of water. Once there, both saw their son for a few minutes, asking and answering many questions.

"I guess Bashy takes good care of you?" said the father.



"Yes," was the reply. "She couldn't do any better if she was my sister. But I long to go to work. If you'll give me money to carry me out West, I wont trouble you any more, and I'm sure I can make enough to pay you back."

"We wont talk about that, my son. Money is of very little consequence to me, compared with your good, and I'll give it to you willingly. But you must stay here till Mr. Whitney comes back."

"Have you heard from him?" asked Ben.

"No," answered his father. "I didn't expect to hear from him so soon. You must be patient. You are safe here, with plenty of time to think."

"O, father, I *have* thought till I am almost crazy," responded the young man. "How could I do as I have! I never should if it hadn't been for liquor. I shall preach temperance the rest of my life. Bashy has told me all about the society here, and I hope you'll join it."



"I am going to, Ben. There wont be any more liquor in our house, except in case of sickness. I'm going to take hold and help Mr. Gibson. He's likely to have a hard time. I wish you could see him and talk with him. He has seen a good deal more of the world than old Parson Grimes."

"I wish I could hear him talk. But I must stay here and see nobody, and I ought to be thankful that I am safe. Do come, when you can, mother," added Ben.

"Yes, my son, I will. But we must be careful not to raise suspicion, till we know how Mr. Whitney makes out." She lingered after her husband had gone below stairs, giving such counsel as a Christian mother might. "Go to the Bible for wisdom, and to God for strength," she said tenderly. "If you will do this, there is hope for you."

"I do try to," he answered. "But my sins are so great, I'm almost afraid to ask for forgiveness. I knew better than to do as I have."



"We all know a great deal better than to sin. But—"

Here Mrs. Welcome was interrupted by a call, which bade her hasten; and stopping only to say "Good-by," she left Ben alone.

"Somebody's comin along the road," said Bashy. "It's best to be on the safe side, so I called up to you for fear that they might come in."

"That's right, but I wish I could stay here all the time. Seems as though I ought to."

"'Twont do, Mrs. Welcome. We've got to be careful. There's been somebody looking for Ben, and the man offered to give Mr. Jenks money if he'd tell where he was. He didn't know nothin to tell, and there aint no need of anybody's knowin. Mrs. Priest aint comin home for a month, and I'll stay right here and take care of your boy."

"You shant lose any thing by it," said Mr. Welcome.

"I don't expect to," was the reply. "I wanted to stay at home and rest a spell."



Folks needn't think I'm goin to run all the time. I've been tellin all of them so this good while, and I guess they'll begin to believe it."

Whether people believed this or not, they certainly did wonder, when, after remaining two weeks at home, Bashy still refused to go where help was needed, and where she would be well paid. The same people wondered also how Mr. Whitney could afford to leave his work so long at this time of year.

In the meantime his daughter had received a letter from him containing a message to Mr. Welcome, to the effect that he was likely to accomplish his business without going far West. "When I get home I will explain every thing," he wrote; and yet he did not say when he might be expected.

Pheny, who understood the significance of this message, rejoiced, although she still refused to see her old playmate. She replied to his note, according her forgiveness, assuring him of her best wishes, and urging him



to redeem his name from the stain which now rested upon it. All this was kindly expressed, but there was no word of love, nothing which betrayed more than sisterly affection and Christian solicitude.

"I'll make myself worthy of her yet," said the young man, crushing the note in his hand. "God helping me, I will redeem the past, and come back to Hardhack in broad daylight." More impatiently, he waited for permission to go his way, longing for labor and its fatigue.

"You're gettin to look a good deal better," said his hostess, when he had been with her two weeks.

"I feel a good deal better, though my side aint quite right yet," was the reply.

"It all comes of leavin off liquor," added Bashy. "You'd died in a little while, if you'd kept on. For my part, I don't see how folks can drink liquor. I haint tasted on't for a good many years, and I never mean to again. I never wanted it, but Lem Weston says it's



been a tough job for him to give it up, and he hankers for it sometimes now."

"Of course he does," answered Ben. "The love of strong drink makes anybody a slave. It's going to be hard work for me to keep from drinkin when I go where there's liquor. A drunkard needs pity, if anybody in the world does; and yet I suppose he's to be despised. He isn't to be trusted anywhere."

"That's what I've said a good many times;" and Bashy Turner nodded emphatically. "I never could see how women folks could marry men that drink liquor."

"There wouldn't be many married if they didn't," said Ben, smiling sadly.

"I know it, but that wouldn't be no matter, accordin to my way of thinkin. I've got along well enough. I haint had nobody to scold me and order me round since I come of age, and I haint worked no harder than other women, neither. When you get married, Ben, I hope you'll remember that your wife has just as good a right to live as you have,



and she's just as likely to know something, as you be to know everything."

"There aint any prospect of my having a wife," was the reply. "There aint but one woman in the world I want, and I aint sure I should want her, if she would have me as I am now. But I'll remember what you say."

Pheny Whitney waited anxiously for her father's return, doing everything possible to expedite the work out of doors as well as in; while John and Frank, who considered their sister worthy of imitation in all things, emulated her industry. Perhaps it was well that at this time she was more than usually occupied with the homely cares of everyday life, for, truth to tell, there was a severe struggle going on in her heart, which she sought to ignore. But she kept her own counsel, and the secret of Ben Welcome's hiding-place; although obliged to hear comments and conjectures in regard to him, when she grew nervous at the mention of his name.

At length, after an absence of three weeks,



Mr. Whitney was at home, and all were relieved.

"Have you settled up for Ben?" asked his daughter abruptly, when a fitting opportunity occurred for so doing.

"What do you know about that?" he asked in reply.

"I know all about it," she answered. "Bashy told me, and Ben has written to me."

"He has!" and as this was said, an expression of extreme annoyance settled upon her father's face. "I would do all in my power to save Ben Welome, soul and body, but I don't think 'twould be safe to trust him very far."

"Neither do I," replied Pheny. "You need have no fears on that score. I have not seen Ben, and probably never shall. But I should be very sorry to know he was in prison."

"There is no danger of that now," said Mr. Whitney, with a sigh of relief. "Money will do almost anything, and he is saved from what most people would consider deserved punish-



ment. But, after all, Bashy has done more for him than anybody else. I don't know another place in town where he could have stayed as he has there. Of course, no one must know it, even after he has gone."

"You can trust me not to tell," father.

"I know it, child. You are like your mother, for she never disappointed anybody who trusted her. What could I do without you?"

A burden of fear and anxiety was lifted from the hearts of Mr. and Mrs. Welcome, when they knew their son could once more breathe the pure air, and bask in the genial sunshine. The mother longed to keep him with her, shrinking from the separation she knew was best. "How can I let you go!" she cried. "O, my son, how could you break my heart?"

This was the first reproach she had uttered; but now, as she felt the pain and loneliness to which his sin had condemned her, she could no longer keep silence.

It was well that Mr. Welcome could think



for others as well as himself, in this parting hour. He calmed his wife, and encouraged his son, commending each and all to the care of Him who giveth liberally and upbraideth not. With a foresight which seemed to look into coming years, he arranged the details of Ben's journey, providing for every contingency that threatened, and leaving nothing undone which could secure comfort and safety.





## CHAPTER XIX.

## THE FIRST FRUITS.



HUS Ben Welcome came and went, while people wondered where he could be, and what he would do.

With never one thought that she might have done wrong in concealing a criminal, Bashy Turner breathed more freely; although she assured her neighbors that she had been resting. Again at liberty, she made a few old-fashioned visits, spending one day at Lem Weston's, and another with Aunt Betty Glines.

"I don't see nothin you have to complain of now," she said to Sally.

"I haint nothin," was the reply; and this double negation, so often used, was by no means intended as an affirmation. "My husband's a good man, and there aint nothin but



what he'd do for me and the children. He works every day, and he don't spend a cent but what we have a share of it. If I knew how to use words as well as Mr. Gibson does, I should like to preach one Sunday. Seems as though I could say something that would send them deacons home to pray for light."

"You might say it to Deacon Flanders any time when you see him," responded Bashy.

"I know I might. But some way I can't. I don't see him very often to speak to him either, for all we live so near together. He never liked my husband, and it seems as though he didn't like him as well now as he used to. But Susan is a good sister, and comes over every time she can. Leazer comes too. He and his uncle are great friends. I believe they'd talk together from morning till night without getting tired. I always love to see him comin. He's a good deal like his mother."

"So he is, everybody knows that," replied the visitor. "I guess his father wont make



out to spoil him, and it's my opinion the deacon's comin round some. I'm goin there to work a spell, and I mean to have a plain talk with him, whether he likes it or not. He done well to Deacon Campbell's raisin."

"Better than Nate Barnes," said Mrs. Weston, with a laugh.

"Yes, I guess he did," was the response. "I haint seen Nate since, though I've heard he kept round home pretty close for a spell."

"I guess he did, and was so ugly, his wife couldn't but just live with him. O dear, there's no end to the trouble liquor makes!" And who should say this, if not she who had been a drunkard's wife? "I should rather die than have my husband take to drinkin again, and I've told him so a good many times. We've just begun to live."

As the long day was not long enough for all that was to be said, Bashy Turner was persuaded to spend the night. About eight o'clock in the evening the husband and father was welcomed home, forgetting hard work and



fatigue in the pleasure of meeting his wife and children. "Yes, temperance has done a good deal for me," he remarked, when congratulated upon the improved condition of himself and family. "But there's a good many more that need it, and I try to talk to them sometimes, though it don't seem to do much good."

"I talk a good deal too, when I suppose it's words wasted; but I've got a work to do with Deacon Flanders, and I'm goin to do it, whether he will hear or forbear. I've been gettin ready for it this good while."

"And I hope you'll convert him, Bashy. 'Twould be a good deal to get him on our side. Mr. Welcome's come round and signed his name to the paper, and says he'll help all he can. I guess Ben's trouble had somethin to do with it."

As Bashy did not care to talk of Ben Welcome, she changed the subject of conversation, and thus no more was said of him. It seemed hardly possible that in this comfortable house, where plenty smiled and affection lightened



labor, she could be visiting the friend whose lot had been so hard, and whose future had seemed so dark. Every thing was bright, pleasant and cheerful, and her visit to Betty Glines was equally satisfactory.

"I've been thinkin that the Spirit of the Lord's at work among us, and I'm looking for a revival of religion," said the lonely woman. "Seems to me, Mr. Gibson never preached as he has lately. You know I can't do much for anybody but pray, and sometimes when I'm here alone, I pray most all day."

"I don't doubt but what your prayers are heard, Mrs. Glines," replied Bashy. "Your prayers and your actions go together, and that's the kind I believe in. Now there's Deacon Porter says he prays for the outpouring of God's Spirit amongst us, and I don't know but he does. But there's one thing certain, he'll have to stop opposin the minister in every thing, before I shall have much faith in him. He wants somebody to take hold with him, and help get rid of Mr. Gibson. I guess



though, he'll have to wait awhile. Deacon Willey wont move very fast, and Deacon Flanders says everybody may do as they're a mind to, for all him; and now Mr. Welcome's come out, I guess he's rather discouraged about makin his plans work."

It was not in words alone that Mr. Welcome manifested the change in his opinions. His sideboard was cleared of decanters and glasses; he withdrew his patronage from the village store where liquor was served to customers, and gave his whole influence in favor of total abstinence. With his pastor he talked frankly of the events which had wrought this change, lamenting the ruin of his son, of which he did not hold himself guiltless. He encouraged all those who were striving to reform their lives, giving a helping hand where one was needed.

As a proof of what good hard work could be accomplished by *temperance* men, Deacon Campbell's barn was boarded, shingled and properly partitioned, in less time than so much



labor had ever before been accomplished in Hardhack. Lem Weston was a host in himself, doing good service both as carpenter and common laborer. Horace Campbell too, did his best, neither complaining of his lot, nor seeking to avoid its duties. Yet farm-work was not his choice, and even with the best intentions, he could not yet think of spending his life, as did most of those about him, without a sigh of regret. Judge then, of his surprise and delight when, after the last load of hay was in the barn, his father said he could go to the academy in a neighboring town, at any time when he could be ready. "I didn't feel as though I could spare you till we got through haying," said the deacon, smiling at his son's astonishment. "The term has commenced, but I guess you can catch up. You are smart enough for that."

Mrs. Campbell having known that Horace would leave home at this time, had made all necessary preparations in the way of clothing, so that he was fairly established in school



before he had quite recovered from his surprise.

Not a grudging word said his father, when placing in his hand an amount sufficient to meet all the expenses of the term. Only this, "Remember your pledge, my son, and pray to be delivered from temptation."

This event was freely discussed. Some condemned, and many wondered how it could be afforded.

"Deacon Campbell aint very forehanded," said old Mr. Nichols. "He'll find it tough work to git along, if he brings up all his boys to larnin. Buildin that ere barn and keepin Lem so long, can't leave him much forehand this year. He use to be a good calkerlater, but lately folks has changed. It makes me feel bad to see boys settin up to know more 'n their fathers; but I'm e'enamost through, e'enamost through;" and the palsied hands were clasped in a way which, under some circumstances, would have been impressive. His last assertion had been so often repeated that no



one heeded it, yet with the falling leaves of this year the old man yielded up his life; and for sweet charity's sake, let us hope he had sinned through ignorance, rather than wilfully. Some tears were shed at his burial, and perhaps no one doubted that he had been a Christian, except Jim Cragin, who whispered his doubts to Bashy, only to be reproved.

"Never talk against the dead," she said, solemnly. "'Taint right, and you shouldn't do it. Your mother don't allow you to."

"I know she don't," answered the boy. "But I didn't know you cared anything about Grandsir Nichols. I aint a bit sorry he's dead, and Joe aint sorry either."

Bashy shook her head at this, and asked Jim who was going to teach school in district number one next winter.

"I don't know," he answered. "I wish Horace Campbell would, and so do the other boys; but father says we'd do better with a stranger. They want Horace over in district number eight. He'll be a first-rate teacher;



not quite so good as Mr. Hudson, but good enough."

Horace Campbell would have preferred to remain in the academy through the winter, but anxious not to tax his father's means too heavily, he decided to teach, hoping to continue his studies and enter school again in the spring. During the autumn term he made rapid progress, measuring himself with others of his age, and arriving at a tolerably correct estimate of his own powers. His love for study so intensified these powers, that to others they seemed even greater than to himself, and he was considered quite "a genius." His father was proud of him all the more, when it was known that neither persuasion nor ridicule could tempt him from the path of duty.

His old companions, who still considered it manly to drain a glass of liquor, and boast their independence, wondered how he would appear when he came home. This they had an opportunity to see during the fortnight's



vacation he spent in hard work on his father's farm.

"He aint no more stuck up than I am," remarked Bashy Turner, when speaking of Horace to Betty Glines. "He goes to work just as he used to, and the deacon says there can't nobody beat him. I've been thinkin for a good while, whether or no he aint a Christian."

"I wish it might prove so," was the fervent reply. "It's been a good while since any of our young folks was converted, and now as there's so much division in the church, 'twould be a great thing if he'd come out. But Mrs. Campbell was up here last week, and she didn't say nothin about it. Seems to me she would, if 'twas so."

"She never spoke to me about it. I only thought of it myself, and may be I'm mistaken. Mr. Welcome says the deacon's got a good deal to be thankful for, and he hadn't ought to begrudge any money he spends for his boys. Aint it a blessin Mr. Welcome's



come round so? Mr. Gibson haint got no better friend than he is."

"And I haint neither," said Mrs. Glines. "He's good as a father to Samuel, and says he'll help him along. I've got some of Ben's old clothes to make over, enough to last my Samuel a year. He brought them home on Saturday night, and he said Mrs. Welcome cried when she give them to him. I don't wonder she did. She's seen trouble, poor woman; but they say Ben's gone clear, and some folks think he's out West."

"I hope he is," responded Bashy. "Have you been to Lem Weston's lately?"

"No, I haint. I've meant to go, but I've been busy. He's doin as he ought to."

"Yes, workin like a trooper, and aint afraid to hoe his row with anybody. He's got a cow, and hay enough to keep it this winter. He raised a good mess of corn and potatoes too, though I don't see when he got time to do it. They've got a pig; so take it all round, they're pretty well off. His mother's come to live



with him. Mary's husband drinks so bad she don't feel like stayin there, and Deacon Flanders says he's willin to pay Lem half what her board's worth if she'd rather stay there than come to his house. Mary Weston threw herself away when she married Eliakim Gray, and he's growin worse every day."

"I'm sorry for her," said Mrs. Glines. "Can't you persuade her husband to give up drinkin?"

"I guess not. Any way I don't feel like tryin," answered Bashy. "He pins his faith to Deacon Flanders, and the deacon's too proud to own he's been wrong. I don't believe but what he's convinced; and there's Leazer, firm as a rock. 'Taint long since he signed his name to our temperance pledge, down to Deacon Cragin's, and I heard him tell his father of it."

"What did the deacon say?"

"Not a word. His face turned as red as a piny, but he didn't speak. He wouldn't say he approved of it, and he wouldn't really want



to find fault after what's happened. I'm in hopes he'll come out before long. Mr. Welcome's been talking with him."

Deacon Porter began to grumble loudly at the lukewarmness of his brethren in fighting the new movement, and attempted another visitation, which failed in the very outset. Soon after, however, an opportunity occurred, which he did not fail to improve in manifesting his contempt for new fashions. One of his children, a girl eight years of age, died, and as usual there was a large attendance at the funeral, Mr. Gibson preaching a short sermon.

An abundant supply of liquor was provided, that all who wished might drink and be comforted, the bereaved father himself setting the example. The "bearers," boys from twelve to fourteen years of age, were really *urged* to drink, and not having been chosen from families where total abstinence was the rule, did not refuse.

It was a sin thus to tempt them with



sugared poison, and but for timely assistance the result would have been sadly terrible. The boys were too much intoxicated to perform their part with propriety, and the deacon was severely blamed. People were shocked, and did not hesitate to express their feelings.

Deacon Cragin remonstrated with his erring brother, but to no effect. Armed with prejudice, obstinacy, and appetite, Deacon Porter resented his well-meant efforts as impertinence. "I've got a mind of my own, and I read Scriptur for myself. I don't oblige folks to drink," he said; and his visitor did not consider it best to waste more words.

The meetings of the temperance society, which had been suspended during the summer months, were resumed directly after Thanksgiving. Notice was given from the pulpit, and a hope expressed that there would be a full attendance. More than this was unnecessary, as there was a more general interest in the subject of temperance than at any previous time. At the first meeting it was



voted that the officers of the society retain their position for another year. Short speeches were made, songs were sung, and the best of feeling prevailed. Among others who attended was Eleazer Flanders, whose coming was more of a surprise to himself than to any one else. The day previous, his father had said to him, "You can go to the meetin to-morrow night, if you want to. I haint any objections;" and the boy took advantage of this permission, although he would not have asked it.

Horace Campbell had commenced his school under favorable auspices. The teacher in number one as nearly made good the place of George Hudson, as was possible. The scholars under his care found their thoughts quickened, and their ambition aroused. The old people liked him for his cheerful piety and genial manners. He, as a temperance man, was expected to aid in every good word and work. Betty Glines wished her boy could attend his school, for, as she said to Bashy Turner, it seemed to her he was "goin to



have somethin to do with the revival in Hardhack." This remark was made when no one could see any reason for expecting a revival, yet the good woman was not disappointed. Lemuel Weston and wife, with Horace Campbell, offered themselves as candidates for admission to the church.

Deacon Porter asked Mr. Weston what first led him to think seriously of his soul's salvation, and the prompt answer was made, "When I gave up the use of liquor, I knew I must have God's help to fight the battle with my appetite. I prayed for help, and the forgiveness of my sins."

In reply to the same question, Mrs. Weston said she had been moved by her husband's prayers, and the change in his conduct. Horace Campbell dated his first serious impressions from the time when he had decided to lead a life of total abstinence from all intoxicating drinks.

This did not please Deacon Porter, who professed to doubt the genuineness of con-




version under such circumstances, taking occasion to speak at length upon what he considered the essential doctrines of the Bible. "'Taint no time for secular things," he remarked, with much asperity. "They haint nothin to do with religion, and them that has the oversight of the church must be careful of its interests." No one making reply to him, and his objections to the candidates being evidently considered of no importance, he retired, with the air of a martyr. After this he was often heard to lament the low state of religion, and the want of "spirituality" in the church, attributing it to the fact that "Scriptur" was perverted, and *man's* counsel preached instead of *God's*.





## CHAPTER XX.

## THE GRAND RESULTS.

EACON PORTER'S influence was on the wane. The church rejoiced at the accession to their numbers, and gathered around the communion table with thankful hearts. Even Deacon Flanders was moved, as he presented the emblems of the sacrament to his brother-in-law. It was an inclement day, but Betty Glines could not remain at home when such a feast was offered, and many an aged Christian wept tears of joy for very thankfulness. Mr. Gibson found it difficult to command his voice, while a deep solemnity pervaded the congregation. People went to their homes to reflect and pray. The neighborhood prayer-meetings that week were well attended, with the exception of that holden at Deacon Por-



ter's. Bashy Turner, who was sewing at one of his nearest neighbors, absolutely refused to go.

"I'd rather have a meetin all alone, than hear Deacon Porter talk," she said, with great emphasis. "I haint nothin to say against him, but 'twouldn't do me no good to go to his meetin. If 'twasn't so far, I'd go to Mr. Whitney's."

It did not seem quite right to go out of the district; but, after some debate, it was decided that Mr. Morgan and his family should attend the meeting at Mr. Whitney's, where the minister was expected, and where they might reasonably hope to be benefited.

This was the commencement of a revival which extended very generally throughout the town. Yet it was a noticeable fact, that in those families where the temperance movement had been opposed, few were brought to Christ; while those who had first espoused the cause were greatly blessed. During the



progress of the revival, Deacon Flanders acknowledged publicly that he had been wrong, and asked the forgiveness of his brethren. He thanked Bashy Turner for her faithfulness, and bade her God speed in the good work, telling her not to be discouraged.

"No more than I expected," exclaimed Deacon Porter. "He's been whiffin round a good while, but there needn't nobody expect me to change."

The following summer a large accession was made to the church, and Mr. Gibson had reason to feel that his labors had not been in vain, although some of his people continued to look upon him coldly.

Meanwhile, one of his friends was passing through a severe experience. About three years before, Mr. Whitney had assisted a relative by undersigning a note for what was to him a large amount. But having the utmost confidence in this relative, he gave himself no further thought about it, until he



was informed that the note had matured, and payment must be made by himself.

Mr. Welcome at once came forward, offering to advance the money, and take a mortgage on his farm, allowing him an indefinite length of time for its redemption. "If worst comes to worst, I will buy your land west, at a fair price. Ben wrote in his last letter that the value was increasing, so you wont lose everything. It's a hard case, brother Whitney, but I've seen deeper trouble than losing money."

"I know it, and I ought not to complain," was the reply. "If I was a young man, I'd go west and improve that land, but it's hard at my time of life to leave home. I've expected the boys would go some time, and I shouldn't make any objections. Do you mean to go this fall, Mr. Welcome?"

"I've been thinking about it, brother Whitney. I want to see Ben, and my wife thinks I ought to go. He writes good letters, and seems as though he was changed. But I could tell better to see him. If we could



spare you here, I should be glad to have you settle out there with him. He writes that he has raised great crops this year."

The note was paid, and the farm was mortgaged; Mr. Whitney blaming himself that by a few strokes of his pen he had so wronged his children. They, however, did not complain, although his daughter shed some tears in secret, and the boys mourned over the anticipated loss of some privileges upon which they had counted.

"It is no time to indulge in gloomy forebodings." Triphena said this resolutely, while discussing the matter with her brothers. "We must all go to work, and see what we can do."

"Have we got to give up our papers, and not have any more books?" asked Frank. "Jim Cragin said old Mr. Sprague said so, but he didn't believe it."

"*You* needn't believe it either," was the reply. "I'll manage that. It wont be necessary to starve our bodies, or minds either. If Aunt Betty Glines could pay a hundred



dollars on her place, it's a pity if we can't clear this farm. We must pay the interest, and two hundred dollars every year, and we must be sure father don't get discouraged. I've thought it all over, and I know just how it can be done."

"I guess you know everything now," said Frank, his face glowing with enthusiasm. "I'll do just exactly as you say, and I won't let father feel bad a minute."

Many expected there would be a decided change in this home, to which refinement and intelligence had given such a charm, but they were disappointed. The fire burned brightly as ever, and there was not one paper or book the less. Bashy Turner could have told how some articles of dress were turned and remade so skilfully that no one would recognize them. Betty Glines knew that the usual web of flannel was not made, yet the family were as well and comfortably clothed as ever, no one dreaming how busy fingers pieced and mended.



Mr. Whitney was astonished to find his expenses so much reduced, while he experienced no diminution of comforts. His farm yielded a larger income than usual, and the first payment on the mortgage was made without any difficulty.

"I'm glad it's paid, but it's a shame for us to work and pay Mr. Freeman's debts," remarked John to his sister. "I should like to give that man a piece of my mind. And then to think it's all because of drinking. That's the worst of it. I guess I hate liquor as much as Bashy does. I heard her talking to Deacon Willey about it the other day, and she told him she hated liquor worse than pison."

"Looking back!" said his sister, with a smile. "You promised at one time to look forward."

"I know I did, Pheny, but I can't always. I aint so good as you are; it's harder for me to do right, though I try, and pray for help. I believe I'm getting discontented. I



want to go out West. I wish you and father were willing to go."

"I should be willing to go if father thought it was best," was the reply. "He thinks he is too old, and you are too young. He needs your help here at home."

"I know it all," interrupted John. "I'll wait till I am twenty-one; and when I've earned enough to carry me there, I'll go and try my luck. Father says I understand farming well enough to manage for myself, and Mr. Welcome says it's the place for me out there. It's my ambition to be a rich, intelligent farmer. Horace Campbell may go through college, but I'll find my college out of doors; and I'll go back to work now, without any more grumbling."

Ben Welcome had now been in the West a year and a half, and his settlement there was no secret. His father, who had visited him, was more than satisfied with the entire change in his habits. Hard work and coarse fare developed his strength, both mental and



physical, and if sometimes he chafed at loneliness and isolation, he never forgot that he deserved far more severe punishment.

Coming in contact, as he did, with many who had thrown off all the restraints of morality, he was often sorely tempted. The intoxicating bowl had been held to his lips, when his brain fairly reeled with the effort to resist its fascination. Yet through all, he remained true to his pledge, having won the sobriquet of "parson," for his strict habits and fearless rebuke of sin.

Another year went by, and although the first flush of enthusiasm which characterizes every reform had given place to a more sober feeling, temperance still received its due share of attention in Hardhack. Of all who had enlisted under its banners not one had deserted. Families were happier; there was less of faultfinding and more of genuine affection; the Christian graces were exemplified, and religion was honored by the conduct of its professors.



But there was another side to this picture. Those who talked most loudly of liberty and moderation, were, in point of numbers, a respectable minority, exerting no small influence in the town. Mr. Gibson felt this keenly, and when he received a call to settle in a thriving village, where his sphere of usefulness would be enlarged, he thought best to accept.

There was strong opposition to this among his friends, both old and young, yet the council, to whom the whole matter was referred, saw fit to dismiss him from his present charge. Then commenced the hearing of candidates, and the discussion of their merits, over which I have not time to linger. In this it was plainly evident that there were still two parties in the church; yet to the credit of Hardhack be it said, the minister who was at length settled was a strong temperance man, who preached the truth fearlessly.

Mr. Gibson's friends gave him their hearty



support, even while lamenting the change. Mr. Welcome treated him most kindly. The Whitney family were cordial, although the loss of his pastor was a sore trial to one who felt himself burdened with care and anxiety more than with the weight of years.

"Father's breaking down fast," said John Whitney to his sister, one evening when they were alone. "What do you say to clearing the farm, this year at all hazards?"

"I should say, do it, if possible," was the reply. "I am willing to make any sacrifice myself."

"So am I," responded John. "I've had a grand offer for my colts, and I'm going to sell them. Don't say a word against it, Pheny, or you'll see me crying like a baby. I wouldn't let them go if there was any other way."

But Mr. Whitney opposed the sale of these colts, and John relinquished his scheme, although still determined to clear the farm in some way. Before the close of the year, relief came in a way least expected. Mr.



Freeman, for whom the debt had been incurred, paid to his friend more than sufficient to cancel the amount then due to Mr. Welcome.

John did not go west, as he had intended. His father's health continuing to fail, it was necessary that he should remain at home; and when he with his brother and sister were orphaned, he would not think of going alone. All would go, or none; and the good sister, who would in no way hamper the lives of those she loved, consented to exchange her home among the New England hills, for one on a western prairie. Farm, stock and farming utensils were sold at auction, while household goods were packed in the smallest possible compass.

In this labor Bashy Turner rendered efficient aid, talking as she worked, to hide her emotion. "Look out for me next year," she said, forcing back her tears. "Most everybody's got the western fever, and 'twouldn't be strange if I should catch it from somebody. There's Deacon Cragin's boys all atilt, and



Horace Campbell says he's goin when he gets through studyin. Leazer Flanders don't give his Uncle Lem no peace, teazin him to go. Sam Glines begins to talk about it too, no older'n he is, and 'twouldn't be none strange if he was a lawyer out there, some time. I tell you, old Hardhack has waked up since that first temperance meetin. Our boys and girls are goin to be somebody, and I'm proud of them, if they don't any of them belong to me. You tell Ben Welcome that, will you, Pheny?"

"If I see him," was the demure reply.

"Well, remember it the first time you see him. I'm in a hurry to have him know it."

Notwithstanding this charge, Triphena Whitney did not remember it the first time she saw Ben Welcome. Indeed, she *remembered* very little at that moment. Her thoughts were wholly absorbed in the present.

The bronzed and bearded man who greeted her and her brothers after a fatiguing day's ride, would hardly have been recognized but for the familiar flash of his eye, and the musi-



cal tones of a voice, which once heard, could not be forgotten.

"How you have changed!" exclaimed John.

"I am glad you think so. There was need enough of change;" and then making haste to speak of other things, Ben added: "You won't find your house like the one you left. But it's the best in the neighborhood, and some time you can have a better one. That's the charm of living here. We are always looking forward. I hope you won't be homesick."

"We shant, as long as we have Pheny," said Frank, decidedly. "Some of the folks thought we ought to come without her; but I wouldn't think of such a thing. She's the best sister in the world. She never gets discouraged."

Never quite discouraged, yet the next day, when left alone, it seemed perfectly natural that she should indulge in a good cry. She heard a step, and without giving it special heed, supposed it to be her brother's. A pair



of strong arms were thrown around her, and she looked up into the face of Ben Welcome.

"I thought it was John," she said in much confusion, seeking to release herself.

"And you see it is Ben," replied her companion, gently detaining her. "Don't send me away from you. I am a better man than I was six years ago. You loved me once, and I have loved you through all these weary years."

Of course, John and Frank were greatly surprised at this turn of affairs. Yet they made no opposition, perhaps because they knew it would be useless, and perhaps because each dreamed of some fair, sweet girl, whom he would call by a dearer name than "sister."

"It's all turned out just as I expected," said Bashy Turner. "There's Mr. Welcome going to take Fanny Campbell out there to be married to John Whitney, and there's no tellin' what 'll happen next."



What happened next, I have not space to record, but old Hardhack sent forth other sons and daughters to this thriving western settlement, which, in the lapse of years, has become an enterprising city, lying far east of the centre of our country.

Horace Campbell, a finished scholar and eloquent preacher, grasps the hand of his brother-in-law, a rich and intelligent farmer. Pheny, as she is still called by her husband, has proved no less wise in training her children than in helping to mould the characters of her brothers; while the luxurious home, over which she presides, is more attractive for the refinement and taste which pervade it, than for all of elegant adorning which wealth has purchased.

Frank Whitney waited long for his wife, but Abby Weston was worth the waiting; and "Uncle Lem," as the old-time drunkard of Hardhack was called, lived to see his daughters well and happily married.

Jim Cragin, a wealthy railroad contractor,



is irrepressible as ever, although wife and children gather about him, and gray hairs remind him that he is growing older. He still sings "Yankee Doodle Temperance," with "Hardhack girls and boys," who often meet to talk of their New England home, and compare the present with the past. And Sam Glines—no one would forget him—a noble Christian lawyer, honored among men, and approved of God.

Will not the work of these sons make as fair a record as that of their fathers?

"Say not thou, What is the cause that the former days were better than these? for thou dost not inquire wisely concerning this."









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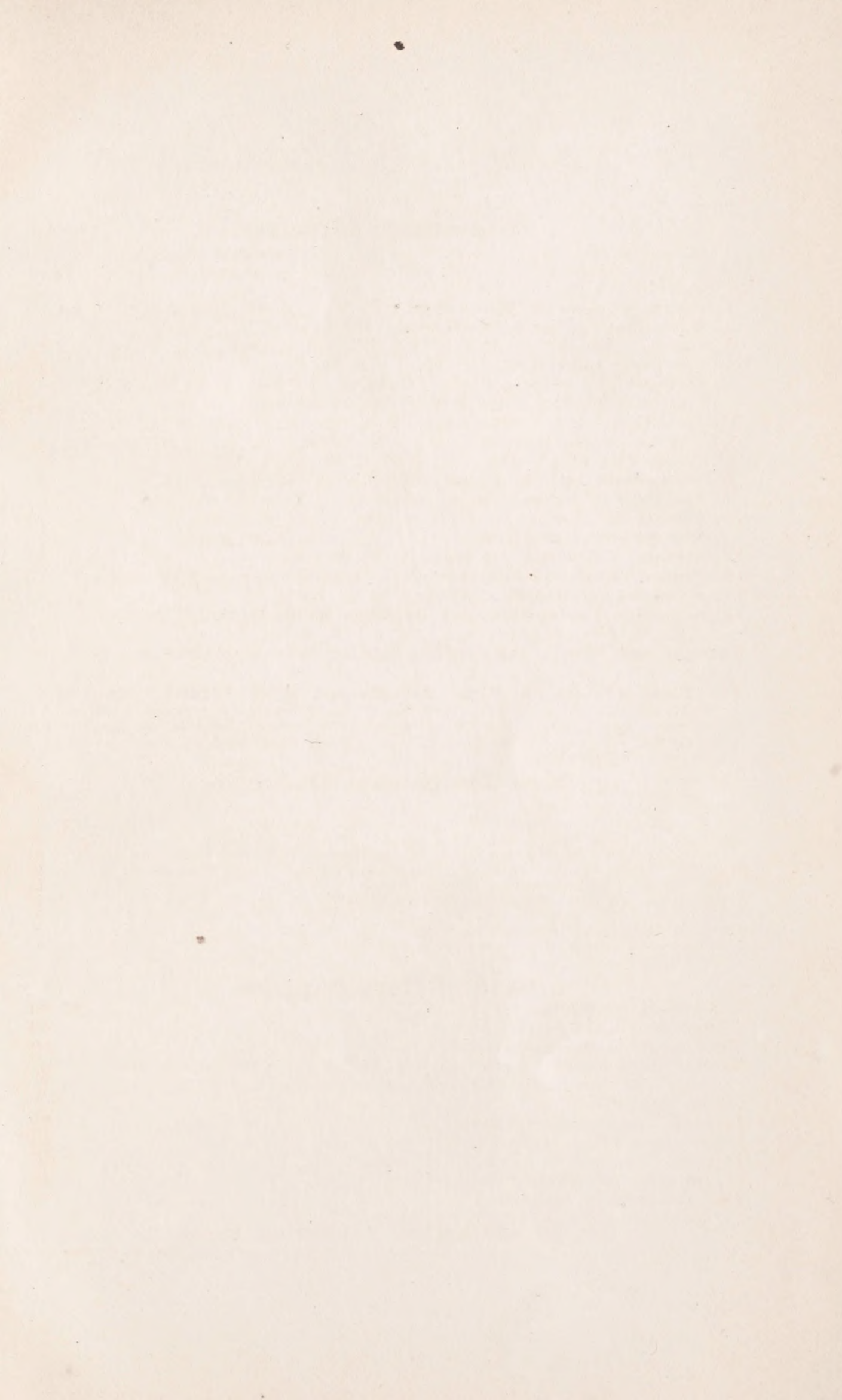
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